



CLIPPINGS GALORE—Clippings and pictures constitute the chief resource of a newspaper library. The clippings shown above are a few of those housed in the files of the *Charlotte Observer-Charlotte News* Library, which is used by reporters and editors on the staffs of the two dailies.

## A LIBRARY OF CLIPPINGS AND PHOTOS

by

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It is a newspaper reference library and not a "morgue" which today provides the information and material in the form of clippings, pictures, engravings, reference books, and pamphlets. Newspapermen, with a good library to help them, should not have to resort to "writing around it" when writing a news story. No longer is the library a convenient

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pasture for an old reporter or editor who is nearing retirement and lacks the old zip and vigor in reporting and writing. The present day newspaper library grew out of the needs of the modern daily, and fills a place of prime importance in the production of the newspaper.

Newspaper librarians have a considerable responsibility in maintaining one of the most valuable sources of information, the newspaper clipping file. Someone has called the newspaper's library its memory. Stories (articles in the language of laymen) in the papers are carefully classified and clipped each day. Stories are classified as simply as possible. Most libraries use manila envelopes of various sizes for the clippings with the proper classifications on each before they are filed. Thus, in one clip file a reporter has access to all the stories that have appeared in the paper on any selected subject.

As a category fills with clippings, the subject is subdivided into as many classifications as may be needed for quick and ready use by the reporter or editor. The library is expected to be able to deliver clippings, as well as other materials and information, on any subject in the shortest possible time. If the request is for a specific story, the reporter should be able to get that story file; if it is for all the clippings on a given situation or person, the reporter should obtain everything with equal speed.

Pictures, of course, were the beginning of the newspaper "morgue". They are still the essence of libraries on papers that use art to enliven and add sparkle to the printed word. Newspapers of today see the need of filing all pictures that add force and interest to the story. Eye appeal makes most papers more readable. Pictures are classified by subject as well as by name. Pictures are thus available immediately for most stories. Whereas clippings may run into the millions, pictures are not too far behind. Many of the larger newspapers have pictures under almost any classification or mood needed.

In order to facilitate deadlines and improve the appearance of the page, metal engravings or cuts are filed in library for ready use. Since most papers now have their own engravers under the same roof, only a small percentage of engravings used in the paper are kept on file. Most libraries keep one column and smaller size cuts of individuals who merit space in the library because of newsworthiness.

Clippings, pictures, and cuts are the backbone of a newspaper library. These are stored in envelopes in cabinets. This means that a newspaper library is different from a public or school library in that filing cabinets are the main pieces of furniture. There are very few shelves.

Books are a part of the newspaper library, especially reference books. The average library has a thousand or so books, with a few of the metropolitan daily newspapers having many times this number.

These books include encyclopedias, dictionaries, *Congressional Quarterly*, *Facts on File*, *Congressional Record*, *Congressional Directory*, books of quotations, almanacs, local and state histories, laws, manuals, geographies, Who's Who, Bibles, biographies, maps, etc. For extensive research on a subject reporters and editors seek help from the college and/or public libraries.

Some pamphlet material is filed by most newspaper libraries. Here the selection is based on information the library anticipates the reporter or editorial writer needing from time to time.

Most of us are familiar with the bound volumes of newspapers printed on pulp paper which turn yellow and brittle regardless of the care in storage. Too often we are made

aware that the public is not immune to clipping and tearing whole pages from these volumes. Clippings in the library share this fate also, maybe even more so. Microfilming of the papers permits storage in permanent form in minimum space. Many papers microfilm clippings for protection from turning yellow and brittle and from being pilfered, as well as to save space. As much as 90 percent of space may be saved by microfilming. Newspapers are looking toward computer indexing and retrieval to help solve the problem of space, time, and efficiency.

In addition to the basic work load, special services to the public are a mark of the newspaper which considers itself a vital and vibrant part of the community. Information and certain services to the public are a part of the library's daily routine. Questions of general information and those requiring limited research are answered. If the information cannot be given readily, then help as to sources of the information requested is given. For obvious reasons, questions involving school homework, with a few exceptions, and answers to quizzes, contests, and most arguments are not answered. A large number of newspaper libraries permit the public to use their facilities and resources though certain restrictions may be imposed on the use of some materials.

Most newspaper libraries sell reprints of pictures made by staff photographers at a nominal cost. This is a community service and is done by these papers in the interest of the goodwill of the community.

As we look over the role of the newspaper library, we can see why the modern newspaper can no longer get by with a meager supply of material for its reporters and editors. As the world horizon has expanded in the past two decades, so has the place of the newspaper in covering this expanded horizon. No longer can the writers and editors write off the top of their heads, or from overstuffed files in desk drawers or pockets. The modern day "morgue" or reference library is playing an increasingly significant role in keeping the newspaper in tune with these expanded horizons.

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