

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library and the Sciences, 1795-1902

by William R. Burk

Early in the history of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, three library collections developed: the University Library and the libraries of the university's literary societies (the Dialectic and the Philanthropic societies, informally known as the Di and the Phi). The university collection was not diverse. It emphasized the classics and theology, reflecting a curriculum strong in ancient languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, and moral philosophy¹ and weak in general literature. Student use of the library was infrequent, due in part to the fact that the favored method of instruction at the university was based on recitations and textbooks and not on outside reading and library research.

Concurrently with the development of the University Library, the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies each collected books and managed libraries for their members. They amassed collections in a competitive spirit, often duplicating books within each library. According to James Lee Love, UNC Associate Professor of Mathematics, students used only the society book collections primarily during the period of 1875-1886. He also noted that "there was no 'research' in science or literature . . . carried on by students." History, biography, government, and English literature, rather than science, were the subject strengths of the collections, according to Love.² In 1884, a student writer also confirmed the bleak assessment of the use of whatever scientific books that the society libraries owned.³ He noted that "the books on Scientific subjects" were seldom removed from the shelves and that many students considered the library as a pleasant place, where they could pass away the time.

On October 6, 1876, one year after the university reopened following Reconstruction, the American Library Association was established. The organization provided librarians with a forum for meetings, publishing, and promoting their profession. A decade later, the university would focus its attention on organizing the three campus libraries under one roof. The Di and Phi societies agreed to move their libraries into Smith Hall, which housed the University Library, with the provision that they were to be shelved as distinct collections. As this arrangement proved to be inefficient, the three collections were unified in 1891 into one collection. About the same time, the

faculty, particularly the scientists, were developing stronger interests in research. It became important for them to have access to collections containing current books for research and education. They also, with increasing frequency, required students to consult literature outside the classroom, and the library became the center of the university. This paper highlights the University Library's general history and development; it chronicles the rise and expansion of the scientific and medical collections as well as the origin of departmental science libraries, with particular emphasis on the biology library. Coverage concludes with the establishment of the Graduate School in 1903 and the subsequent rise of research at UNC. Although the available historical archives and records do not always provide a continuous chronology, I have attempted to present as unified a picture as possible.

Table 1. University Library Chronology, 1796-1902, with Emphasis on Its Science Collection

1796	An Introduction to Botany (1794), by James Lee, first botany book acquired
1799	Archibald DeBow Murphey, first known tutor/librarian
1802	Total number of volumes, ca. 869
1816	Total number of volumes, ca. 975
1824-1825	President Joseph Caldwell acquires 1,039 volumes in Europe
1836	Total number of volumes, 1,900
1849	Total number of volumes, 3,500
1852	Smith Hall completed as library building
1853	Books moved to Smith Hall
1854	Total number of volumes, 3,600 volumes
1858	Elisha Mitchell library (1,897 volumes) purchased
1868-69	Suspended because of Reconstruction
1869	Total number of volumes, 6,540
1869-70	Fisk Brewer, librarian, acquires 300 books
1871-75	Closed because of Reconstruction
1875	Total number of volumes, 8,394
1877	Francis Jones Smith medical library (about 200 volumes) donated

1881-83	Henry Horace Williams, librarian, sets up residency in Smith Hall
1884	Total number of volumes, 9,000; pamphlets, 2,000
1886	Joseph A. Holmes book collection approved for purchase
1886	Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies libraries (about 15,000 volumes) moved to Smith Hall, but maintained as distinct collections
1890s	Library becomes "heart of the University" ^a
1891	Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies libraries integrated with University Library
1891	Department of Biology library formed
1892	Duplicate books sold to raise money to acquire new books
1892	Thomas Fanning Wood medical and botanical collection (1,200 volumes and 1,000 pamphlets) donated
1893	Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies donate their libraries; official name of the Library becomes "The Library of the University of North Carolina, Endowed by the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies"
1894	Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society Library (about 11,000 books and pamphlets) moved to Smith Hall
1894	Benjamin Wyche becomes "first regular full-time University librarian" ^b
1894	Total number of volumes, 24,400
1895	Total number of volumes, 26,000; pamphlets, 10,000
1898	Smith Hall entrance moved to eastern end of building
1899	Francis Whitford Potter medical library (206 volumes) donated
1899	Henry Weil gives \$1,000 to purchase library equipment and books
1901	Louis Round Wilson becomes librarian
1902	Total number of volumes, 40,272

^aMinutes, Board of Trustees of UNC-CH, vol. 9 (April 1891-January 1898): 571.

^b"Librarian Wyche," Alumni Review 18 (1930): 277.

Assembling the Collection

In 1785, a decade before the university opened, the first book was given to it—as well as to each state university—by Charles Thomson, Secretary of the U.S. Congress. The university was not yet founded; however, the North Carolina Constitution made a provision for its establishment in 1776. The gift book was “The Works of the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Wilson, D.D. Fifty-eight Years Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man. With His Life Compiled from Authentic Papers by the Rev^d. C. Crotwell,” second edition, 1782.⁴ The two-volume work contains a biography of Wilson as well as his official papers. Around 1870, the volumes disappeared from the library but were replaced in 1960 through the donation of a copy by Brown University on the occasion of the UNC Library’s acquisition of its one-millionth volume. UNC Librarian Louis R. Wilson gives a thorough background on this book.⁵

Two days before the doors of the university opened to students on January 15, 1795, the Board of Trustees approved the purchase of a bookcase and a bookplate (figure 1a) for a library.⁶ At its meeting of December 7, the board resolved that nine sets of books, consisting of 46 volumes, should be purchased.⁷ Between 1800 and 1875, however, only two significant collections were purchased for the library. The library’s primary means of growth was from donations. From 1795 to 1797, the library received 133 books (comprising 56 titles) as donations.⁸ Among the books was *An Introduction to Botany* (1794, 5th edition, corrected) by James Lee (figure 1b).⁹ The first known botany book, and probably the first scientific book, to be acquired by the University Library, it was the earliest (first published in 1760) botanical textbook in the English language, based chiefly on Carl Linnaeus’ (1751) *Philosophia Botanica*.¹⁰ Richard Bennehan presented the book, along with 31 others, in July 1796.¹¹ A successful merchant, planter, and builder as well as a pioneer in the tobacco industry and in

education, Bennehan (figure 2) was a proponent for establishing the university at Chapel Hill.¹² Besides being a donor, Bennehan served the university as a trustee from 1799 to 1804.

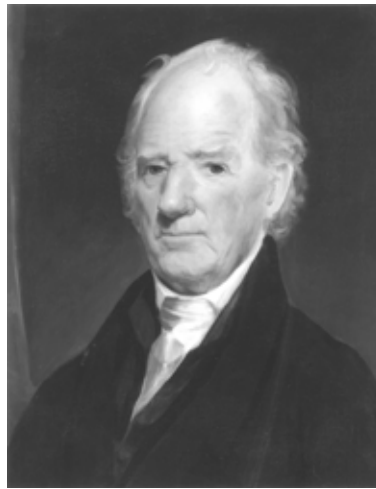


Figure 2. Richard Bennehan. (Cameron Papers #133; Courtesy of Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library).

The UNC trustees’ minutes for December 3, 1802, note that among student costs was a library fee of 50¢ per session.¹³ This tax subsequently increased to \$1.00 per session, but it was abolished in June 1827, when an annual appropriation of \$250 was authorized for the library.¹⁴ Around 1889, students were again assessed library fees, by then \$2.50 each term.¹⁵

In the latter part of 1802, articles in two Raleigh newspapers (North-Carolina Minerva¹⁶ and Raleigh Register¹⁷) itemized the library holdings under two listings: one by donors, the other by purchases made by the trustees. Additional information on the contents of the library up to 1802 is contained in several sources: a manuscript

by UNC president David L. Swain,¹⁸ entries in the trustees’ minutes,¹⁹ and four passages in historian Robert D. W. Connor’s book on the early documents of the university.²⁰ These sources provide a means for calculating a rough approximation of the number of volumes and titles of books in the fledgling library. The cumulative totals for donations are 389 volumes (227 titles) and for purchases, 223 volumes (79 titles). At the end of 1802, the library probably contained about 869 volumes (306 titles). Of these titles, at least 12 concerned science. (Table 2) The library also contained five maps. Despite the growth of the library, William Polk, president of the UNC trustees, mentioned in early 1803 “the almost naked shelves of the Library.”^{21,22} Requesting additional

donations of books from the state’s citizens, he asked the editors of newspapers in the state to place the university’s appeal for contributions in their papers. At least 12 people responded to Polk’s appeal for books by donating 42 volumes (20 titles) in 1803.^{23,24} Of these books, one title concerned science (Table 2).

Over a decade passed until archival records reveal other donations to the library. Two donors gave 64 volumes of books to the University Library in 1816. Philadelphia publisher Thomas Dobson’s gift consisted of two volumes (one title) and that of Rev. James Hall, 62 volumes (52 titles).²⁵ Among these gifts were nine titles pertaining to science. (Table 2)

In 1817, the University Library came under the scrutiny of a special committee authorized by the North Carolina Legislature to prepare a report on the condition of education in the state. North Carolina attorney and legislator and UNC trustee (1802-1832) Archibald D. Murphey chaired the committee. About the University, as well as its instructional tools, the committee noted: “It is at this moment almost destitute of a Library and entirely destitute of the Apparatus necessary for instructing youth in the mathematical and physical sciences.”²⁶ The committee’s recommendations included the purchase of apparatus for mathematics and physics and the development of a library.²⁷

UNC President and Professor of Moral Philosophy Joseph Caldwell, who was also a mathematician and competent astronomer, had been acutely aware that books were essential for the scholarly pursuits of the professors. In a letter of February 19, 1824, to the UNC Board of Trustees, he noted “that a professor in a college who is without books in tolerable supply, is analogous to the creation of nobility which for want of estate is obliged to live in rags.”²⁸ The trustees approved Caldwell’s recommendation to purchase books (and apparatus) in Europe and appropriated \$6,000 for that purpose.²⁹

Caldwell sailed for Europe on his book buying expedition about early May 1824.³⁰ He visited England, France, Italy, and Switzerland. At the conclusion of his trip, Caldwell had acquired 979 volumes (as well as 60 additional donated books). He returned to UNC in mid-March 1825 and received a warm welcome by the students.³¹ The trustees, deeply grateful for Caldwell’s devotion to the university and the library, issued a resolution to express their gratitude.³²

Although Caldwell presented a detailed report and financial account of his purchases to the trustees in December 1825,³³ there is no known surviving copy of the report. Nonetheless, some insight into the titles and the kinds of books bought is gained in passages of publications by Fisk Brewer and Kemp P. Battle. An inspection of the books currently held in the UNC library system has provided further knowledge about the titles of books purchased

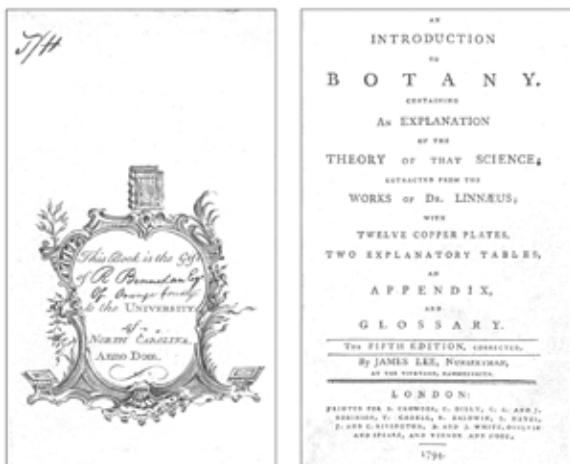


Figure 1. (a, left) Book plate and (b, right) title page from UNC’s copy of *An Introduction to Botany*, by James Lee. 5th ed., corrected. (1794). (Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library).

Table 2. A List of Known Scientific Books Held in the University Library up to 1816.

Years Given	Author /	Title/Year Published (when known)	Donor/Purchase	Present Location
1795-1802	Adam[s], [George]	[Lectures on natural and experimental philosophy]	Purchase	none known
	Buchan, William	Domestic medicine	Abraham Hodge	none known
	Cheselden, William	The anatomy of the human body	Calvin Jones	none known
	Fenn, Joseph	Arithmetic and algebra	Joseph Gales	none known
	Goldsmith, Oliver	A history of the earth and animated nature	Abraham Hodge	
	Lee, James	An introduction to botany, 5th ed., corrected (1794)	Richard Bennehan	NCC
		Medical review, volume 1	A Society of Gentlemen of Smithfield	none known
	Newton, Isaac	Opticks	Col. Robert Fenner	none known
	Nicholson, William	An introduction to natural philosophy, new ed.	Purchase	none known
	Saint Pierre, Bernardin de	Beauties of the studies of nature	Gen. Allen Jones	none known
	Smellie, William	The philosophy of natural history (1790)	Richard Bennehan	NCC
	Winslow, Jacque-Bénigne	An anatomical exposition of the structure of the human body, 6th ed. (1772)	Dr. Calvin Jones ?	HSL
1803	Lemery, Nicolas	A course of chymistry	John Bryan, Jr.	none known
1816	Cavallo, Tiberius	The elements of natural or experimental philosophy (1813)	Thomas Dobson	NCC
	Keill, John	An introduction to natural philosophy	Rev. James Hall	none known
	MacClaurin, Colin	A treatise of algebra	Rev. James Hall	none known
	Mead, Richard	Medica sacra	Rev. James Hall	none known
	Rohault, Jacques	A system of natural philosophy	Rev. James Hall	none known
	Shaw, Peter	A new practice of physic	Rev. James Hall	none known
	Simpson, Thomas	Essays on several curious and useful subjects, in speculative and mix'd mathematicks	Rev. James Hall	none known
	Tauvry, Daniel	Traité des medicaments	Rev. James Hall	none known
	Willis, Thomas	Dr. Willis's practice of physick	Rev. James Hall	none known

*NCC=North Carolina Collection; HSL=Health Sciences Library, both UNC--Chapel Hill

in Europe. In his pamphlet on the history of the University Library, UNC Professor of Greek Fisk Parsons Brewer identified a number of the titles that Caldwell had bought in Europe.³⁴ Among them were a series of Latin (Delphin edition) and Greek classics as well as original editions of major works on natural philosophy (physics) and astronomy. In astronomy, titles included those of Galileo, Tycho Brahe, and Johannes Kepler; in geometry, early works by Euclid in Greek, Latin, Arabic, French, and English. Caldwell's purchases notably favored titles in his scientific specialties of mathematics and astronomy. In addition to Caldwell's purchase, tutor and librarian Joseph H. Saunders reported that the library acquired 18 titles of books and journals (consisting of 110 volumes and fascicles) from February 1823 to December 1824.³⁵

Historian and UNC president Kemp P. Battle refers to an historical document that sheds light on a number of books that Caldwell purchased.³⁶ Confirming Fisk Brewer's note about the purchase of volumes in the Delphin series, the document is a receipt for 53 volumes of the Delphin Classics (numbers 89-141).

Knowing that Caldwell emphasized the purchase of scientific books, particularly in his area of expertise, I made a general search for appropriate titles in the following collections at UNC: Health Sciences

Library, Math/Physics (Brauer) Library, North Carolina Collection, and Rare Books Collection. I narrowed the search further by looking for labels with Parisian vendors' names and addresses pasted on the flyleaves. Caldwell bought a large number of books from Parisian booksellers because books on the continent were less expensive than those in England, and Paris was then a significant center for book publishing. Several books with the Parisian label and the contemporary library book stamp were located in the Math/Physics Library and Rare Book Collection: Euclid's *Elementa Geometrica Demonstrationum Libris Sex* (Lugduni, 1557), Euclid's *Elementorum Libri Priores Sex* (Glasgae, 1756), Galileo's *Systema Cosmicum* (Augustae Treboc, 1635), and Kepler's *Ephemerides Novae* (Lincij, Austriae, 1619).

By 1836, the library contained 1,900 volumes.³⁷ Although the collection of the antebellum library at UNC was small and access to it was limited, the university was concerned about its preservation and safekeeping. In addressing the last two issues, the faculty implemented library rules and regulations. Documentation on policies for using the library materials are scattered throughout the minutes of the trustees and faculty. In 1799, the trustees issued a set of nine rules on the library and librarian.³⁸ In June 1827, the faculty passed resolutions stipulating that students could not remove books from the

library nor retrieve volumes from the bookshelves. Only the attending librarian was allowed to retrieve and return volumes to the shelves.³⁹ The trustees updated the rules on the library and librarian in 1822 and 1829.^{40,41} Subsequent guidelines for the library and librarian were issued in 1859. They appeared in the *Acts of the General Assembly and Ordinances of the Trustees for the Organization and Government of the University of North Carolina*.⁴²

Table 3. Regulations for the Librarian and Library (1859)^c

1. No person but a Trustee or Member of the Faculty, shall at any time have access to the Library, without the presence of the Librarian or some officer of the College.
2. The Librarian, at the end of every session, shall present to the Faculty a written report of the state of the Library.
3. Such books as, by a determination of the Faculty, ought not to be taken out by the Students, may be consulted by them in the Library, on such days, and within such hours as shall be appointed by the Faculty.
4. A Student may not at any time, take down a book from the shelves of the Library. The Librarian alone is to deliver it to him, and return it to its place.

5. When a Student shall take a book out of the Library, he shall sign a receipt, in which the book shall be specified by the Librarian.
6. A volume shall not be kept out of the Library more than one week, without being returned to the Librarian, and the receipt for it renewed. If any other person shall want the volume at the end of that time, the one who has already had it, shall not then take it out anew.
7. When a book shall be given out or returned, the Librarian shall examine it, to see if it be damaged or defaced; and if a Student shall deface or damage a book belonging to the Library, he shall pay according to the damage done, as estimated by the Faculty even to the replacing of the set. If he shall lose it he shall pay to the Librarian its value, as estimated by the Faculty, or else he shall replace it as above. If he shall fail to return it in two weeks after taking it out of the library he may be judged to have lost it, and the Faculty may proceed accordingly. If a Student shall refuse to comply with the decisions of the Faculty on these subjects, he may be admonished, suspended or dismissed, as the nature of the case may require.
8. The Librarian shall keep a catalogue of all the books of the Library. If any book shall be presented to the University, the name and residence of the donor shall be recorded.
9. The Librarian shall appoint a day and hour for delivering and receiving books, and shall attend once a week for these purposes.
10. While the Students are attending at the Library they shall observe an orderly deportment.
11. A Student shall not lend a book which he has taken out of the Library, without permission from the Librarian.

⁴⁷From Acts of the General Assembly and Ordinances of the Trustees, for the Organization and Government of the University of North Carolina. (Chapel Hill: James M. Henderson, 1859), 22-23.

The faculty minutes of November 1852 note a "gift of a parcel of books" from the Smithsonian Institution and the donation of volume two of "Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes in the United States," by Henry R. Schoolcraft from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.⁴³ In November 1855, Elisha Mitchell presented a faculty resolution recommending that funds \$500, \$800, or \$1,000 should be appropriated to purchase books for the library, provided the treasury could support the acquisition.^{44,45} He noted that nearly 30 years had elapsed since any considerable expenditures had been made for book purchases.

Besides Caldwell's purchase of books in 1824 and 1825, the second most significant antebellum acquisition was the library of Elisha Mitchell, which the university bought in 1858, following Mitchell's death on June 27, 1857. Hired as the professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at UNC in late 1817, Mitchell began teaching in early 1818, and he subsequently became the professor of chemistry, geology, and mineralogy in 1826.

A glimpse into Mitchell's purchases of publications is gained from passages in one of his private journals held in the UNC Southern Historical Collection. Numerous entries list books ordered from Collins & Co., a New York book dealer. Although Mitchell stopped buying books for the university in 1827, when the student library fee was abolished, he continued buying books for himself.⁴⁶

Nearly six months after the death of Mitchell, a committee met in Chapel Hill to audit and settle his estate.⁴⁷ Richard J. Ashe, administrator of the estate, joined the meeting. The group agreed on a price of \$1,000 to purchase Mitchell's scientific apparatus and cabinet of minerals for the university. As Mitchell's book collection had already been boxed up, the committee could not inspect the volumes for appraisal. Professors Fordyce M. Hubbard, John Kimberly, and Manuel Fetter were asked to examine the books, and they later provided their opinions on which titles should be bought for the University Library. Their favorable evaluation led to the trustees' resolution "to purchase the whole of the Library of the late Dr. Mitchell & to pay his Administrator the sum of Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars in full for the same."⁴⁸ According to Brewer,⁴⁹ there were 1,897 books. Mitchell's library was practically evenly divided between belles-lettres/ theology and science (chemistry, geology, mathematics, mineralogy, and biology). The holdings of the collection were itemized in a 15-page "Catalogue."⁵⁰

In early February 1858, tutor and librarian, Fordyce Hubbard, confirmed the transfer of the book collection to the "Library room of the University."⁵¹ Richard J. Ashe managed the move. By the subsequent November, Hubbard had arranged the books and begun to compile a catalog of them. Hubbard noted that the collection was shelved "with the rest"; he wrote, "as I found that very few volumes already in the Library had any mark to identify them as the property of the University, I was obliged to stamp the college name in them all, the old and the new ones."⁵² According to Hubbard, another acquisition in 1858 was 140 volumes of mostly government publications.⁵³

In 1987 and 1990, UNC Professor of History, Michael McVaugh, republished the catalog of Mitchell's library and added annotations, including information on the current locations of volumes in the campus libraries.⁵⁴ Today, nearly three-fourths of the books from Mitchell's library survive and are housed in the university's libraries. It is noteworthy that a large number of books that Mitchell had purchased for the library turned up in his own library. Before the University Library had its own building in 1852, the faculty customarily removed books from its shelves, especially those in their fields of specialty, to their study quarters. The purchase of Mitchell's library and the collection of books purchased by Caldwell probably "had given North Carolina one of the two or three best scientific libraries in the [antebellum] United States."⁵⁵

As the dark clouds of the Civil War descended over Chapel Hill in the spring of 1861, great numbers of students abandoned their studies to fight on behalf of the Confederacy. Of fourteen members of the faculty, six joined the war effort, and eight remained.⁵⁶ Despite the departure of numerous students and faculty, the campus remained open for the duration of the war. Although there is little recorded information about the library from 1861 to 1868, a letter from UNC Professor of Mathematics Charles Phillips to Kemp Battle points out several deficiencies in the library.⁵⁷ Many of the deficiencies in the library developed during president Swain's administration (1835-1868), and Phillips had warned him about the sad state of affairs. When Professor of Chemistry William J. Martin left the university in 1867, he took his personal chemistry library with him, and the university lost all the current books for teaching that subject. Phillips further claimed that if he left the institution and removed his scientific library then teaching in mechanics, machinery, and physics would be "ridiculous." Even the collection of books on geology and mineralogy that Elisha Mitchell had amassed were no longer useful in those disciplines.

From about July 1868 until March 2, 1869, the university suspended its operation due to actions of the reconstruction government of North Carolina. The new trustees were concerned for the safety of the campus buildings and the protection of the libraries, apparatus, and furniture, among other items.⁵⁸ For this reason, the library books were temporarily moved to "the third story of the Old East, where they remained till the autumn of 1869."⁵⁹ During this period of time, the collections of the Di and Phi libraries suffered the loss of volumes and damage to numerous volumes because of a leaking roof. The University Library escaped such misfortune.⁶⁰

Fisk Brewer served as a part-time faculty librarian from March 1869 to at least mid-1870. He stated that no written history of the University Library was known to exist when he assumed his library responsibilities. In an eight-page pamphlet, Brewer gave a brief historical account of the University Library. He wrote that a library tax and donations were the primary sources of funding for the University Library in its early years.⁶¹ During his tenure as librarian, Brewer reported the addition of 300 volumes. The collection of pamphlets then numbered at least 1,000, which may have been from the donation of Rev. Josiah Brewer.⁶² Among the volumes added to the library during Brewer's librarianship were two or three dozen Sunday School books given by a group of Bostonians through the efforts of one of the university professors' wives. Upon learning about this acquisition, local newspaper columnist Cornelia P. Spencer inspected the volumes and expressed her pleasure with the gifts.⁶³

The library was closed from February 1871 through August 1875, when the university was once again shut down by the reconstruction government. Prior to the university's reopening in September 1875, a committee was charged to inspect the campus buildings and provide an assessment of their physical condition to plan for their repair.⁶⁴ The committee reported that the walls of Smith Hall appeared to be sound. Nevertheless, it was unable to inspect the interior of the building to assess the state of the roof or of the books because it did not have keys to the building. Andrew Mickle, UNC's newly appointed bursar, later obtained keys to the campus structures. He reported that the college and Philanthropic Society libraries appeared to be in good order; however, the Dialectic Society library had been "utterly neglected."⁶⁵ He noted that the volume count for each collection was as follows: "College" library, 8,394 books; Philanthropic library, 6,905; and Dialectic library, 6,908, plus thirty books returned after he made his inventory. Former Governor Zebulon B. Vance painted a bleak picture of the state of affairs. He wrote "How many volumes [from the libraries] have been pillaged and carried away it is impossible to say . . . but the damage to those remaining is distressing."⁶⁶ Six weeks before classes resumed, the staff was setting in order the University Library, which had just received a shipment of books. These volumes included publications from Washington, D.C., including the Smithsonian Institution and Congress.⁶⁷

During the decade after the university reopened in 1875, the university received the library of Dr. Francis Jones Smith, who died on April 17, 1877. His sister Mary Ruffin Smith donated his medical library of about 200 volumes to UNC, in accordance with his wishes. An inventory of the gift was published in the 1877-1878 UNC catalog (pp. 59-60). Among the books currently surviving from his library (most in the Rare Book Collection of the UNC Health Sciences Library), a few are marked with an ownership stamp (figure 3) and his signature. When Mary died on November 13, 1885, she bequeathed to the university a tract of land consisting of 1,440 acres in Chatham County, North Carolina, about eight miles from the campus. Having inherited the land (known as the Jones' Grove tract) from her brother Francis, she wished to commemorate him by naming the gift "the Francis Jones Smith Fund."^{68, 69, 70} Income from the fund was to assist "poor & worthy young men of the state" who desired to attend UNC.⁷¹

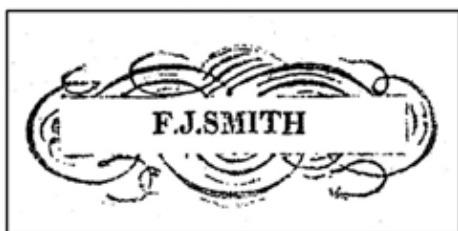


Figure 3. Ownership stamp of Francis Jones Smith on fly-leaf from *A Visit to Thirteen Asylums for the Insane in Europe*, by Pliny Earle, Philadelphia: Dobson, 1841. (Courtesy of Rare Book Collection, Health Sciences Library, University of North Carolina).

Following the acquisition of Jones's library, there was a continuous donation of books—as well as some journals—from concerned citizens, scientists, and publishers. From 1876 to 1885, the university's catalogs listed the donations made to its library, which included 360 volumes of scientific and medical publications. A number of scientific disciplines were represented: chemistry, 4 volumes; zoology, 7; mathematics, 8; astronomy, 17; general science and technology, 32; geology, geography, and mineralogy, 38; agriculture and botany, 40; and medicine, 213. These books supported research and teaching in areas in which the state desired to develop its natural resources and thereby improve its economy. Publications donated by agricultural experiment stations and geological surveys from other states accounted for nearly one-fifth of these volumes. Between 1881 and 1882, Cornelia Spencer donated nearly 1,000 volumes from the library of her late father, James Phillips, who had been UNC professor of mathematics and natural philosophy (1826-1867), teaching mostly mathematics in later years. Kemp Battle notes that the majority of the works were theological.⁷² A number of these volumes, however, were mathematical, and many survive in the UNC Math/Physics Library. Spencer's donation occupied an entire alcove in the library.⁷³ By 1884, the University Library had grown to house roughly 9,000 books and 2,000 pamphlets.⁷⁴ The donation of scientific books in these early years barely met the needs of the university's scientists, however. By the early 1890s, the campus science professors deplored the lack of modern scientific books. Their concern is discussed later in this paper.

Consolidating the Three Libraries

It is noteworthy that in early 1885 the University Library had been reorganized and rearranged under the supervision of professor and librarian George T. Winston and assistant librarian Rev. Christopher C. Newton.⁷⁵ Ten large cases had been purchased to form 40 alcoves for the books. All the volumes had been brought down from the high shelves, where they were difficult to reach. The appearance of the room was now deemed "very handsome and inviting." After the consolidation, the public documents were placed on the upper shelves all around the room.

In 1885/1886 the holdings of the Di and Phi libraries collectively numbered 15,000 volumes.⁷⁶ These collections were housed on the top floors of New West and New East buildings, respectively.

According to UNC junior, William J. Battle, sentiments about consolidating the campus libraries were mounting by 1885.⁷⁷ In autumn of that year, John F. Schenck, a UNC senior, introduced a motion at a Dialectic Society meeting in support of consolidating the collections. "There was a long and exciting debate on the motion which was finally defeated by a two-thirds vote exactly," Battle recalled.⁷⁸ In the following spring, the faculty presented a similar proposition to the Phi through President George T. Winston that was passed by that society. After prolonged and intense discussions, the motion was next approved by the Dialectic Society.

During that summer, the collections of the society libraries were moved to Smith Hall. The task of moving the books began on June 14. "They were carried in arms & partly in wheel barrows."⁷⁹ Each collection, however, remained distinct, shelved in its own area. UNC senior, Stephen B. Weeks, reported that the Di collection was housed in the alcoves and shelves on the south side of the library, with the Phi on the opposite side.⁸⁰ "The handsome furniture" of the societies was moved to the library as well, giving it a look of comfort.⁸¹

Without purchasing additional alcoves for shelving the three separate collections, the faculty made several changes to the arrangement of the library at the time of consolidation.⁸² Professors George T. Winston, Walter D. Toy, Joshua W. Gore, Francis P. Venable, Ralph H. Graves, and Joseph A. Holmes reviewed the collections preparatory to transferring some volumes to the old Phi library in the New East building. They weeded out volumes that could "be spared with least injury to the combined Library."⁸³ Among the books identified for removal were old textbooks, outdated medical works, volumes with tattered binding, and "all the books in the departments of Natural History and Chemistry."⁸⁴ Professors Holmes and Venable thought it best to remove the latter two categories of books in their entirety, which would be more useful than separating them between the consolidated library and New East. Shelved in the old Phi library, the books would receive appropriate care and would be available to those wanting to use them.

Another new feature of the combined library was a reading room that was formed by combining two small rooms at the west end of the library. The rooms had formerly been used as a librarian workroom and as dressing rooms during the commencement ball.⁸⁵ In fact, students had known about the creation of a reading room the previous year through a notice in the May 1885 issue of the *University Magazine*.⁸⁶ The reading room was located at west end of the building and was stocked with magazines, reviews, newspapers, and other serials valued at \$150.

Stephen B. Weeks praised the "consolidated" library, mentioning that it now had more open hours, was heated, and offered a pleasant place for spending time.⁸⁷ Another writer considered the room "not

only a source of pleasure, but of instruction to professors and students.”⁸⁸ A year before the move, the faculty had approved a resolution that gave its members better access to the library. “The members of the Faculty shall be provided with private keys in order to use the library and reading room at any time, but no papers or magazines shall be removed from the library.”⁸⁹ Weeks also noted that the windows had been painted to preserve the collection, which had been subjected to fading from the sunlight.⁹⁰

The separate shelving of the collections proved to be inconvenient to library users. By September 1891, the volumes of the three libraries had at last been integrated. In fact, the faculty resolved to have a card catalog developed for the collection, to be paid for jointly by the two societies and the faculty.⁹¹ The reorganization of the collection was completed under the supervision of Professor of Greek Language and Literature Eben Alexander with the assistance of Victor S. Bryant (librarian), Frederick L. Willcox, Thomas J. Wilson, and Benjamin Wyche.^{92, 93} As compensation for serving as library supervisor, Alexander was allowed to live in his house rent-free by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.⁹⁴ The faculty took note of the newly fashioned library and made motions both to allow the librarian to set hours for serving students and to order books for the collection itself. The university bursar, however, would continue to purchase library supplies.⁹⁵ Although the students were impressed by the improved arrangement, they further recommended that Sunday hours of service be instituted.⁹⁶

Soon after the consolidation, many of the duplicates and selected out-of-date volumes from the three collections were culled and stored in the rooms of the former Di and Phi libraries. Some of these books—over 5,000 volumes—⁹⁷ were later offered for sale as itemized in a 28-page booklet, “Second-Hand Books from the Libraries of the University of North Carolina — and of the — Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies.” Issued about February 1892, the catalog contained nearly 1,420 entries, including each book’s size and price.⁹⁸ A few of the books were botanical: Henry Goadby’s *A Text-book of Vegetable and Animal Physiology* (1858), Almira Hart Lincoln’s *Familiar Lectures on Botany* (1829), François André Michaux’s *The North American Sylva* (2 copies – Paris [1819] and Philadelphia [1853]), and Peter M. Roger’s *Animal and Vegetable Physiology* (1836). Money received from the sale of the duplicates and unwanted volumes went toward the acquisition of new books.⁹⁹ By the fall of 1892, “more than six hundred and fifty dollars worth [of books] had been sold, or exchanged for other books not in the library.”¹⁰⁰ The faculty agreed to give the unsold duplicate books to the A & M College and the Normal and Industrial School for Women (now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro).¹⁰¹

Seven years after the Di and Phi libraries had been integrated with the University Library collections, Edwin A. Alderman, supervisor of the library, reported another important change. The societies donated their book collections of nearly 20,000 volumes to the university, and the official name of the library became “The Library of the University of North Carolina, Endowed by the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies.”¹⁰² As the library was developing, faculty members recognized a need for more flexible borrowing privileges to facilitate their teaching and increasing role as researchers. In 1897, the faculty voted that “books relating to their departments [could] be charged to their departments and kept indefinitely.”¹⁰³

Housing the Collection

In the earliest years of the University Library, books were housed in the first president’s house or in lecture rooms of South Building. At their July 1796 meeting, the trustees directed that a small room in front of the head of the stairs of the president’s house be fitted with shelves for books.¹⁰⁴ In December 1812, a Raleigh newspaper reporter noted that the college library would be housed in the “principal building” (South Building),¹⁰⁵ which was completed in 1814. The library was subsequently moved there. In the mid-1820s, the library was moved to a second floor that had been built in the middle of the south side of the building, where it shared its quarters with a lecture room for the university president and the professor of rhetoric.¹⁰⁶ Geology professor Collier Cobb noted that Professor Caldwell installed astronomical instruments (a meridian transit instrument and a clock), from at least 1825 to 1827,¹⁰⁷ in this shared room. (Caldwell’s surveillance of the heavenly bodies constituted the first “systematic” observations of their kind in the United States. Professor Love wrote that these observations continued from university buildings until 1831, when an observatory was completed).¹⁰⁸ In 1836, the library shared its space with the junior recitation room, where it was exposed to excessive dust.¹⁰⁹

Construction of a new building for the library collection began in 1850. According to an article about the impending commencement exercises in June 1852, the library building was also to be used for dances; it was called the “just-finished ball-room” by the reporter.¹¹⁰ By inference, we can assume that the hall was completed by June 1852. Cornelia Spencer also noted that “in 1852 Smith Hall was completed.”¹¹¹ The June 8, 1852, UNC Faculty Minutes also mention the new library, noting that



Figure 4. Smith Hall, ca. 1860. (Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, University of North Carolina Library).

“Prof. Hubbard, Tutor Phillips and the Librarian were appointed a committee to prepare a catalogue of the Books in the University Library, and to cause it to be removed and properly rearranged in the New Library Building.”¹¹² (John Alcott, historian of architecture and UNC professor of art, described and illustrated the library building’s history, particularly its design and early years.¹¹³) The collection of books and pamphlets was moved in about 1853¹¹⁴ to the new structure, which was reminiscent in form to a Greek temple. The building, Smith Hall (now Playmakers Theatre) (figure 4), was named in honor of Governor Benjamin Smith of Brunswick, North Carolina, who is considered the first benefactor of UNC.¹¹⁵

Throughout most of the library’s occupation of Smith Hall, the faculty and university leaders had designs on the building for the expansion of educational programs and other purposes. In 1854, a laboratory of analytical chemistry was developed in the basement.¹¹⁶ (On occasion, the faculty also approved other, non-academic, uses of the basement. In the summer of 1857, they granted the ladies of the Episcopal Church use of the space to hold a fair.¹¹⁷) About July 1876, Professor Alexander F. Redd proposed “that Smith Hall should be changed from a Library to a room for the Departments of Physics and Chemistry.”¹¹⁸ The Board of Trustees rejected this idea but approved the use of the old chapel building (Person Hall) for Redd’s department.¹¹⁹ The upper floor of Smith Hall remained library quarters, but the chemistry lab was revamped in 1877. In a circular, Battle described the renovations, which included deepening the basement for its entire length and pouring a cement floor.¹²⁰ The facility was supplied with gas, made on the campus, and with water from a force pump and tank. The enlarged laboratory housed desks and apparatus for instruction in analytical chemistry. The space was now also used as an experimental lab for the chemist of the State Board of Agriculture and his assistants, whose work fulfilled the responsibilities of the newly established Agricultural Experiment Station. Cornelia Spencer visited the renovated

quarters of the lab in early April. There she saw the lab "lit with gas, & the boys ... at work in their long aprons down there distilling, combining, resolving, experimenting."¹²¹ A student reporter described the lab in less flattering terms. He reported in 1885 that the lab had poor ventilation and bad lighting.¹²² Obviously this was not a good foundation for the library.

In contrast to the poor environmental conditions of the chemical laboratory, President Kemp Battle described the library as being "well ventilated and well lighted, sufficiently large for the needs of the near future, provided that alcoves shall be built" for the collection.¹²³ He observed, however, that numerous books were out of reach; many volumes were shelved 15 to 20 feet from the floor. This arrangement created a great risk "to life or limb" in retrieving books. The Visiting Committee, which was charged to report on the state of the university teaching and facilities, also referred to the precarious state of the shelving; only a "frail ladder" aided in reaching the volumes, and every "sublime ascent [was] likely to end in a ridiculous descent."¹²⁴ Within a year, alcoves formed by bookcases were in place, and they provided better access to the volumes.¹²⁵

The library was used as planned for social events, particularly at commencement, when the books and furniture were moved aside to provide a ballroom for the occasion. Such events led to its being called the "Ball Room" or "Assembly Hall." A Raleigh newspaper reporter described the "ball room" at the evening celebrations of the commencement of June 6, 1879.¹²⁶ "The elegant hall was festooned and looped with evergreens and beautiful flowers. The shields and badges of the societies were wrought in most cunning and wonderful ways in roses and vivid green. The walls were alternately paneled in white and blue [society colors], and the bright floor danced in the reflections of the chandeliers." The reporter continued, "The music floated through the hall and out of the windows." During the summer Normal School sessions, social gatherings took place in the library at least once a week. Cornelia P. Spencer was acutely aware that such exposure to public events "made it an insecure asylum for books."¹²⁷

Sentiments against dancing and the commencement ball became increasingly pronounced in the late nineteenth century, however, particularly among Baptist and Methodist church leaders. A reporter for the *Biblical Recorder*, a Baptist periodical, condemned a several-weeks' course on dancing given prior to the commencement ball.¹²⁸ He considered it "a pity that time should be wasted and strength exhausted in shaking the feet and skipping over a floor," which he called "feats that monkeys can

perform in common with man." The squandered time, he felt, was meant to be used in the eyes of the Creator for a better purpose. In writing to President Battle, Adolphus W. Mangum, UNC professor of mental and moral science, history, and English language and literature, also voiced his objection to dancing on campus. He considered such a course of permissiveness to be "suicidal." He recommended that dancing on the college grounds be banned.¹²⁹ In 1885, university trustees prohibited dancing in the Smith building.¹³⁰ Running water was supplied to the scientific laboratories and other campus buildings about 1893. Soon after, sanitary facilities were planned for Smith Hall.¹³¹ In 1894, bathtubs, shower baths, water closets, and urinals were installed under the

the older runs of government publications.¹³⁴ In 1901, books were moved from the gallery over the east end of Smith Hall to a front room in the basement, in which shelves had been built.¹³⁵ Both the internal and external appearance of the library building continued to garner the attention of the trustees and faculty. By September 1898, the entrance to the building had been moved to the eastern end, where it had been originally intended to go, and the tall colonnades had been repainted¹³⁶ (figure 5). On the western end, a "neat" balcony replaced the "unsightly" steps. Commenting on the interior improvements, a student wrote: "The reading room is occupied by cases for government publications, and desks and tables for papers and magazines have been placed in the library proper.

The bookcases are arranged in the western half of the library, leaving an open space at the end, which makes the room more attractive. The floor is covered with bright colored matting."¹³⁷

Further efforts were made to make the library more attractive and appealing. Toward this goal, the librarian installed glass exhibit cases containing museum items (figure 6). In his presidential report of January 1896, George T. Winston mentioned the addition of the Willie Person Mangum Jr. collection of Chinese and Japanese pottery, bric-a-brac, and shells, which was donated by Mrs. Mangum as a memorial to her husband.¹³⁸ An 1848 graduate of UNC, Mangum later became a diplomat and foreign service officer.¹³⁹ Other displays noted in the fall of 1896 included curios previously displayed in the history room, such as a special collection of old money (including Continental) and manuscripts. Another historical relic, UNC's antique telescope that Collier Cobb had "exhumed," occupied a place.¹⁴⁰ In addition to portraits and pictures hung on the walls, handsome busts and classic plaster statuary provided "value as well as books."¹⁴¹

The citizens of the state financed enhancements of the library with donations. Around the year 1899, Henry Weil, a UNC trustee from Goldsboro, North Carolina, donated \$1,000 to the library.¹⁴² Half of the proceeds was used to provide new equipment, including "a handsome desk constructed for the Librarian ... bicycle ladders put on each side to make the high shelves available and thus secure much needed room," and a new furnace.¹⁴³ (Apparently, a large wood-stove had been previously placed in the library about the end of 1886. One writer extolled "its beauty and elegance," and noted that "it look[ed] like a 'precious stone set in the silver sea.'")¹⁴⁴

This acquisition of a furnace was welcomed; students had previously noted problems in heating the library.¹⁴⁵ During the winter, students would move the chairs close to the source of heat. Unfortunately,



Figure 5. Smith Hall, 1890s. (Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, University of North Carolina Library).



Figure 6. Smith Hall. Interior view, ca. 1896. (Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, University of North Carolina Library). Note glass exhibit cases containing museum items.

library in the basement. The wastewater was piped into a stream in woodlands about one-quarter mile from the southern edge of campus.¹³² The basement was also increasingly being used for library needs by 1898, when unused duplicate volumes were transferred there.¹³³ Two years later, a small basement room was fitted with shelves for storing

not all the chairs could be moved—the librarian had chained some of the chairs to the floor! In 1897, faculty supervisor of the library, Francis K. Ball, had recommended switching to a wood-burning furnace, which would not only eliminate damage to books from coal dust and ash but would also be more economical.¹⁴⁶ The other half of the Weil donation was allotted for the purchase of books in political and social science, which constituted the Weil Collection.¹⁴⁷

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the library had become “the heart of the University,” according to President Edwin Alderman.¹⁴⁸ The students were now active users of the library. By February 1892, the library was open five hours per day and the reading room all day. A reporter for the Tar Heel, the school’s newspaper, noted that in 1894, open hours were from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., “with exception of [a] half hour for dinner.”¹⁴⁹ In announcing the opening of the 1894 Summer School, a local reporter noted: “The greatest attraction will be the fine library . . . [and] its reading room laden with the best papers and magazines in the United States.”¹⁵⁰

Professors of most departments now required that their students “consult and use” the library books in their daily assignments.¹⁵¹ They were proud of the library resources and appreciative of the improvements made inside and outside of Smith Hall. A student reporter from the Tar Heel expressed his thoughts: “There is no part of a College or a University to which more interest is attached than to its library, and this is the paramount reason why it should always be made as beautiful as possible, the arrangement convenient, and the library services the best to be had.”¹⁵²

Alongside their appreciation for the library, students developed an interest in preserving the library and its collection. Between 1894 and 1898, they expressed their concerns in articles appearing in the campus periodicals, the Tar Heel and the North Carolina University Magazine. They aimed to educate their classmates about the proper care of books and to admonish the “non-appreciative vandals.” Student columnists condemned the defacement of books and serials, including the practices of cutting and mutilating pages and of penciling comments on inside margins of books.¹⁵³ One student reviewed the proper way to remove a volume from the shelf

and how to hold it while reading.¹⁵⁴ Scholarly behavior held similar importance. Loud talking and smoking were deemed unacceptable.¹⁵⁵

Library Management

The library was first tended by a diverse group of people, including tutors, faculty serving part time, and students (Table 4). Two of these early librarians, W. H. Owen and H. H. Williams, deserve particular mention. William Hayes Owen was awarded the A.B. (1833) and A.M. (1838) at UNC and served as tutor of ancient languages beginning in 1835. On September 12, 1836, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees approved the appointment of a librarian at a yearly salary of \$100.¹⁵⁶ Owen was selected for the position, in which he became one of “the most active of the early librarians.”¹⁵⁷ He was responsible for developing a library stamp (figure 7) to serve as an ownership device for newly received volumes in the library. Five of Owen’s librarian reports (1836, 1837, 1838, 1840, and 1842) survive in the University Archives at Chapel Hill.¹⁵⁸ Owen remained as tutor of ancient languages, until 1843, when he was appointed professor of ancient languages at Wake Forest College (now University) in North Carolina.¹⁵⁹

Table 4. Librarians, Library Officers, and Assistants in the University Library, 1799-1902^d

1796-1797	Willie Jones, William Richardson Davie, and Thomas Blount, Library Committee	1877-1878	Frederic William Simonds, Librarian	1894-1896	Edwin Anderson Alderman, Supervisor of the Library Benjamin Wyche, Librarian
1799	William Richardson Davie, Willie Jones, and David Stone, Library Committee	1878-1880	Adolphus Williamson Mangum, Librarian	1896-1897	Francis Kingsley Ball, Supervisor
1799-1800	Archibald DeBow Murphey, Librarian	1880-1883	Henry Horace Williams, Tutor and Librarian	1897-1898	Eben Alexander, Supervisor of the Library Ralph Henry Graves, III, Librarian
1800-1804	Richard Henderson, Tutor and Librarian	1883-1884	Edward Daniel Monroe, Librarian	1898-1899	Eben Alexander, Supervisor of the Library Ralph Henry Graves, III, Librarian Fred Jackson Coxe and Junius Daniel Grimes, Assistants in the Library
1805-1806	Atlas Jones, Tutor and Librarian	1884-1885	Alfred Decatur Ward, Librarian		
1806-1807	James Martin, Tutor and Librarian	1885-1886	George Tayloe Winston, Librarian Christopher Columbus Newton, Assistant		
1808	Gavin Hogg, Tutor and Librarian		1886-1889	James Lee Love, Librarian Joseph Algernon Morris (Phi) and John Fenelon McIver (Di), Society Librarians (1886-1887) Victor Silas Bryant (Di) and St. Clair Hester (Phi), Society Librarians (1887-1888) Stephen Cambrelenge Bragaw (Phi) and Thomas Lake Moore (Di) Society Librarians (1888-1889)	
1809-1810	Abner Wentworth Clopton, Tutor and Librarian	1889-1890		St. Clair Hester, Librarian	
1811	Lewis Williams, Tutor and Librarian	1890-1891		Victor Silas Bryant, Librarian	
1812-1813	William Hooper, Tutor and Librarian	1891-1892		Eben Alexander, Librarian Shepard Bryan and Francis Howard Batchelor, Student Librarians	
1814-ca.1815	Abner Stith, Tutor and Librarian	1892-1893		Eben Alexander and Frederick Leroy Willcox, Librarians	
1818-1857	Elisha Mitchell, "Director" of Library; purchases books for library, 1818-1827 Joseph Hubbard Saunders, Tutor and Librarian (1824) William Hayes Owen, Tutor and Librarian (1836-1843) Ashbel Green Brown, Tutor (later Adjunct Professor) and Librarian (1844-1856)	1893-1894		Edwin Anderson Alderman, Librarian Fordyce Cunningham Harding, Assistant Librarian	
	1858-1868		Fordyce Mitchell Hubbard and David Lowry Swain, Librarians		
	1869-1870	Fisk Brewer, Librarian			1900-1901
1875-1877	Ralph Henry Graves, II, Librarian			1901-1902	

⁴ Expanded and adapted from a list compiled by Louis Round Wilson in *Papers on the Library of the University of North Carolina, 1776-1927*, vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: L.L.

^d Expanded and adapted from a list compiled by Louis Round Wilson in *Papers on the Library of the University of North Carolina, 1776-1927*, vol. 1 (Chapel Hill: L.R. Wilson, 1966), 375.

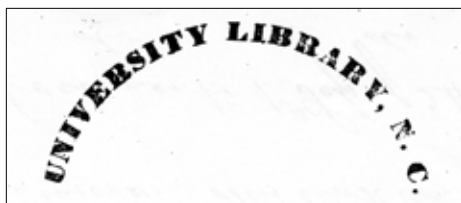


Figure 7. Stereotyped Stamp of the University Library, N.C., December 1837. (from Report upon the State of the Library, by W. H. Owen, 1837). (Courtesy of University Papers #40005, University Archives, University of North Carolina Library).

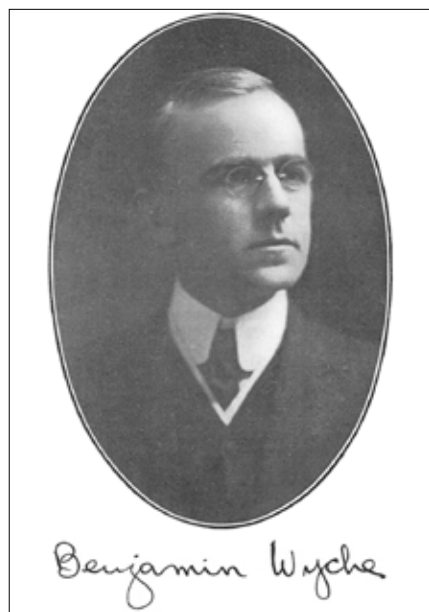


Figure 8. Benjamin Wyche, ca. 1919. (Courtesy of the University of North Carolina Alumni Center).

In the early 1880s, Henry Horace Williams, who had been known for his reliability and his fondness for books, was not only serving as librarian but was also literally a resident librarian. Living in Smith Hall,¹⁶⁰ he set up sleeping quarters at the west end of the building, which lacked heat.¹⁶¹ He served in the library until his graduation in 1883. At the June commencement exercises, Williams earned two degrees, the A.B. and A.M. His Masters was the first at UNC to be based on scholarly merit; previously they were of an honorary type.¹⁶² Horace Williams, as most people knew him, subsequently became a renowned professor of philosophy at UNC and the “gadfly of Chapel Hill,” as described by his college mate Robert Watson Winston.¹⁶³ Six years after Williams’s graduation, a policy was instituted that allowed students who acted as librarians to receive half their tuition in addition to pay for working in the library.¹⁶⁴

At a faculty meeting held on March 2, 1894, a motion passed that allowed the president and faculty member/librarian to hire a full-time librarian at a salary not in excess of \$500 per year,¹⁶⁵ as authorized by the university trustees.¹⁶⁶ In 1894, Benjamin Wyche, who had received a Bachelor of Letters degree at UNC the same year, was offered the librarian position.¹⁶⁷ As a stipulation of this

appointment, he completed a nearly six-week library course at Amherst College that summer, with his expenses paid by UNC. He studied library management under the direction of William I. Fletcher, a noted college librarian and editor of Poole’s Index.¹⁶⁸ Wyche (figure 8) is considered to have been “the first regular full-time University librarian” at UNC.¹⁶⁹

Prior to Wyche’s selection, librarians had been appointed for one-year terms, but on a part-time basis. One of the editors of the North Carolina University Magazine commended the university for establishing the permanent library position, ending the inefficient yearly change in management.¹⁷⁰ Wyche served as librarian until early in the Summer of 1897. He then became librarian at the University of Texas upon the invitation of George T. Winston, who had assumed the presidency there in 1896. At Texas, Wyche was the university’s (and perhaps the state’s) first trained librarian.¹⁷¹ The next UNC librarian was Ralph Henry Graves. Through the ensuing years of the library’s development, a succession of individuals guided its growth and progress.

Louis Round Wilson became University Librarian in 1901. Under his guidance, the library developed a prominent research collection. Work on restructuring the library began as soon as the Summer School of 1901 concluded. The staff reclassified the collection using the Dewey decimal system of cataloging and classification.¹⁷² As a means of strengthening the library, Wilson also “persuaded the literary societies to forfeit their option of transferring their books to the society halls from the library.”¹⁷³ In 1907, the library was moved into the newly erected Carnegie Library (now Hill Hall), a turning point in its development as an eminent research library.

Development of the Scientific and Medical Collections

In the second year of his presidency, Kemp Battle highlighted the deficiencies of the University Library’s collections in science and the arts.¹⁷⁴ In his annual report of February 1885, he made a particularly strong case for building up the library collection.¹⁷⁵ He stated: “Books are the tools of the teacher and we must keep pace with all the improvements, discoveries and changes in the world of thought.” He emphasized that the mission of the university could not be fulfilled if it did not have a strong library collection. He recommended an appropriation of \$3,000 for new books and an annual appropriation of \$500 in subsequent years. He also noted the need for a salaried librarian to maintain the library and the preservation of the books. Although it was several years before his requests were fulfilled, the trustees became increasingly aware of the pressing needs of the library. In their report of 1886, the Visiting Committee also pointed out to the Board of Trustees that the library should be augmented, particularly with “modern works on Science.”¹⁷⁶

The science faculty and students had long recognized the lacunae in the University Library collection. Professor Elisha Mitchell noted that science and literature were glaringly deficient in the library collection.¹⁷⁷ In filling the newly-created professorship of agricultural chemistry, Benjamin S. Hedrick wrote to President Swain in 1853 about acquiring scientific literature to support his teaching and studies. He was particularly eager for the library to obtain runs of important scientific journals and of the transactions and proceedings of learned societies in the U.S. and Europe.¹⁷⁸ In 1854, a student using the alias La Mar lamented that library holdings in the disciplines of science, politics, and history were poorly represented. He used the subject of geology as an example in pointing out the deficiency of science books in the collection. He claimed that none of the three libraries provided adequate coverage to teach even the basic principles of geology. Notable among the types of books lacking were North Carolina geological survey reports, including those prepared by UNC professors Denison Olmsted and Elisha Mitchell.¹⁷⁹ In 1867, Professor of Mathematics Charles Phillips voiced his shame in having the newly-hired Professor of Geology and Mineralogy Washington C. Kerr arriving at UNC without adequate books in his discipline represented in the library collection. He claimed that the out-of-date books acquired from the Elisha Mitchell library would not suffice. Phillips had warned Governor Swain about the lack of current books from the past twenty years and also noted “that scholarship & books [had not been] valued right here.”¹⁸⁰

Eminent UNC chemistry professor and later UNC president Francis P. Venable noted that the books “were kept practically locked up” in the early days. As a consequence, he said, professors “spent [their] own small savings in gathering a few books.”¹⁸¹

UNC Professor of Geology and Natural History Joseph A. Holmes was among those faculty who developed personal libraries for teaching and keeping abreast of new theories and discoveries in their fields of expertise. Holmes’s book collection of unknown quantity was approved for purchase by the UNC Faculty in January 1886.¹⁸² Additional information about this acquisition is yet to be found in the literature or archival sources.

The university’s scientists were increasingly involved in research. They attempted to develop modern laboratories by acquiring necessary space and fitting them with new apparatus. At the same time, they acquired the literature needed to carry out their research. In chemistry, Professor Venable expressed a pressing need for books for students. Although he had allowed his students access to his personal library, he could no longer afford this practice. In 1888, he claimed that the University Library lacked works in chemistry published after 1856, except for one or two titles. Among the chemistry books that Venable recommended for purchase were reference works, treatises, and books

on analysis and theoretical topics, at a total cost of \$250.¹⁸³ Three years later, chemistry professor Charles Baskerville reiterated the need for such books. He was unhappy that instructors spent their own money to acquire the necessary literature for their students and themselves.¹⁸⁴

Professor Collier Cobb of the geology department pointed out that the library housed only a half dozen useful books in geology and mineralogy. At an inconvenience to his research, he placed a great part of his private library in the laboratory, where his students could consult it. Cobb built up the geological literature by exchanging reprints of his journal publications with his colleagues.¹⁸⁵ In 1894, he stated that “the general library of the University . . . [has] absolutely nothing that is valuable to the student of geology.”¹⁸⁶

Professor of Biology Henry Van Peters Wilson was also keenly aware of the importance of literature for the progress of research and scientific investigations. For the “real” student, he argued, textbooks and compendia would not suffice. He stated, “The works and figures of previous students must be critically studied, if an actual advance is to be made.”¹⁸⁷ Soon after his arrival at UNC, he began to develop a working library in the biology laboratory, subscribing personally to several seminal periodicals that the library lacked.

The university trustees took note of the faculty’s comments about the library’s deficiencies. President Winston announced at the September 18, 1894, faculty meeting that \$500 would be made available for the purchase of books for the library.¹⁸⁸ This was an increase of several hundred dollars from the university’s investment of \$200 for books in 1892.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the Di and Phi societies made contributions; in 1892, each gave \$150. A student reporter noted that additional funds would be expended on books in 1895.¹⁹⁰ He commented that the additional funding would “soon make our library one of the best in the South.”

Development of the Biology Library

Because of the need for current publications and for the proximity of such collections to the research setting, the laboratories of biology, chemistry, and geology/mineralogy were convenient and logical sites for the development of departmental library collections. The formative period of development of the biology library took place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but it was born when Professor Henry Van Peters Wilson constituted a one-man department of biology beginning in the fall of 1891. Trained at Johns Hopkins University in research techniques styled on the German model, Wilson believed that the consultation of literature was second only to the subject of research. While a student at Hopkins, Wilson had used the Hopkins biology library, which had been established in the Biological Laboratory in 1883. The collection was open for “the freest use of all books in it.”¹⁹¹ As early as 1893, the literature in the UNC biology

laboratory included seminal periodicals, principally in zoology, such as *Journal of Morphology*, *Zoologisches Centralblatt*, and *Journal of the Royal Microscopical Society* according to the 1893-1894 university catalog (p. 85). The collection of zoological literature was gaining significance as an adjunct to research. It was called a “departmental library” in the 1894-1895 university catalog (p. 98) and was openly accessible to the students. During the next four years, several additional journals were added to the growing biology library: *American Naturalist*, *Anatomische Anzeiger*, *Ergebnisse der Anatomie und Entwicklungsgeschichte*, *Nature*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science of London*, *Science*, *Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Mikroskopie*, *Zoological Bulletin*, and *Zoologischer Anzeiger*.¹⁹² Wilson also personally subscribed to many salient scientific serials: *The Biological Bulletin*, *American Journal of Anatomy*, *American Journal of Physiology*, *Memoirs of the Boston Society of Natural History*, and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.¹⁹³ These he added to the biology department library, which eventually developed into the “Zoology Library,” subsequently the Zoology Section of the John N. Couch Biology Library, and currently the Biology/Chemistry Library. In the 1895-1896 annual report for the Department of Biology, Wilson mentioned that he was encouraged by the 1894-1895 appropriation for the acquisition of books for the laboratory.¹⁹⁴ In successive years, his budget typically included requests for the purchase of literature.

In 1895, Benjamin Wyche embarked on a project to account for campus books held outside the general library in Smith Hall. Wyche planned to make “a list of the books from the library kept in the different departmental libraries” to be used for inventorying the holdings on occasion.¹⁹⁵ Among his endeavors, he aimed to catalog the books in the biology laboratory, housed in the New East building, so that the main card catalog would have a record of them. A few books had previously been cataloged, but the majority had not. In his annual report for 1896, he noted that the cataloging of the biology collection had been completed. The library now had an inventory for the holdings of the biology laboratory, and users could access the literature via the card catalog. Wyche then suggested that “all books could first be cataloged in the general library and then sent to the departments.”¹⁹⁶

Volume 6 of the library accession volumes includes two lists of books that collectively provide a general inventory of books in the biology laboratory during the mid-to late 1890s.¹⁹⁷ On the right-hand side of the page beginning with entry 26,441 is a handwritten note. It reads: “These books were already in Biol. Lab. at time entered here. Some of them had been there for some years, others were recent additions, purchased with funds appropriated for Lab. supplies – Only a few had ever been entered in card catalogue – They are not included in this list, but proper change is made in

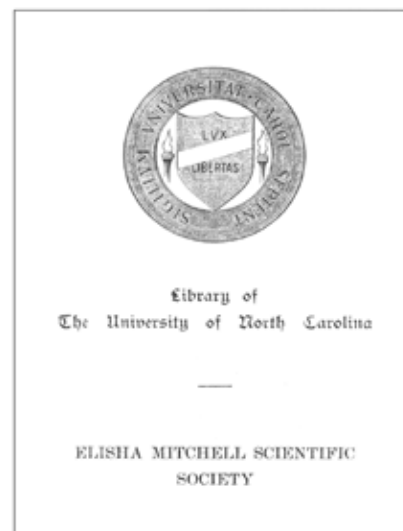
card cat. showing them to be in Laboratory. 14 Ja. ’95.” This list of books includes entries 26,459 through 26,548 in the accession ledger. The second list is based on a handwritten sheet inserted in volume 6 of the library accessions volume.¹⁹⁸ A note at the top of the sheet reports: “The following books already in Biol. Lab. were not entered in accession book; as they had already been cat’d. in card cat. The changes on the cards will show that they were in Lab. – Jan. 1897. Those already entered in acc. bk. are not given in this list.” Of a total of 110 titles (consisting of approximately 140 volumes), 22 titles (consisting of 26 volumes) are on botany or horticulture, accounting for 20% of the titles housed in the biology library.

Acquiring Medical and Scientific Collections

In the 1890s, three significant medical and scientific book collections were acquired. The transfer in 1894 of the library of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society to Smith Hall particularly enriched the collection. During this decade, the University Library also received two outstanding donations of medical books: the Thomas F. Wood Collection in 1892 and the Francis W. Potter Collection in 1899. Each of these three collections was initially maintained as a separate unit within the library.

When the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society was established in the fall of 1883, one of its objectives was to publish a journal. The first volume contained 97 pages, and the third volume increased to 146 pages. From its inception, the society aimed to collect and preserve scientific publications pertaining to North Carolina as well as books, papers, or manuscripts of its members or workers in North Carolina.^{199,200,201} Louis Round Wilson noted that the society library was founded in 1884.²⁰² Each volume in the library contained an identifying bookplate (figure 9). In the academic

Figure 9. Bookplate of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society from UNC’s copy of *The Journal of the Franklin Institute*, devoted to Science and the Mechanic Arts, vol. 130, 1890. (Courtesy of University of North Carolina Library).

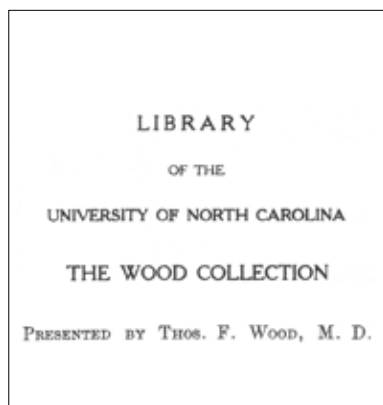


year 1884-1885, the university set aside a room to house the growing collection.²⁰³ The “pleasant” quarters were furnished with shelving, desks, and tables. UNC Professor of Natural Philosophy Joshua Walker Gore served as the society librarian from 1887 (at the latest) to 1890.²⁰⁴

With the growth of the library, the society’s administrative council realized that guidelines for managing the collection were needed. They set forth three recommendations: (1) that lists of publications received should be published in the *Journal*; (2) that members should be allowed to borrow books or manuscripts from the library provided they pay for postage; and (3) that borrowed items should be returned within two weeks of lending.²⁰⁵ The recommendations were approved at the December 1887 meeting.

As a means of building up the library, the society journal was offered in exchange for the publications of other scientific associations. The practice of trading journals and books issued by learned societies and academies of science in this country was coming into vogue by the end of the nineteenth century. These exchanges were mutually beneficial to the trading partners. In its fourth year of publication, the *Journal* maintained an exchange with 25 foreign countries and 36 domestic organizations. One year later, there were 205 exchanges, of which 75 came from 14 different foreign lands.²⁰⁶ The impressive increase continued in 1889, when exchanges grew to 271 (136 from the United States). The rate of increase then diminished; in 1891 there was a net increase of 20, and in 1892, 4. A cumulative register of 308 exchanges documents the organizations from which materials were acquired from 1884 to 1892. As the number of exchanges grew each year, the receipt of materials likewise grew. The volume count of books and pamphlets was 400 in June 1887, 1,391 in May 1888, 3,521 in December 1889, 8,778 in December 1891, 9,948 in December 1892, and 11,000 in March 1894.

Figure 10. Bookplate of the Wood Collection from UNC’s copy of *American Weeds and Useful Plants*, by William Darlington. Revised with additions by George Thurber (1879). (Courtesy of the John N. Couch Biology Library, University of North Carolina).



The collection of scientific literature amassed by the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society was moved into the University Library in the early part of 1894.²⁰⁷ A student reporter was pleased with the new location, noting it was “more handy” for students.²⁰⁸ Prior to this merger, students could gain access to the society collection only under certain circumstances, according to a note in the 1893-1894 UNC catalog (p. 88). In the fall of 1894, Jesse M. Oldham, who had received the A.B. degree at UNC that summer, commenced to arrange and catalog the Mitchell Society library.²⁰⁹ In 1901, books from the gallery of the east end of the library were transferred into a newly furnished room in the basement to provide shelving space for the scientific journals acquired by the society.²¹⁰ At that time, the Mitchell collection was still “undergoing classification in the balcony room” of the library.²¹¹ The Visiting Committee of 1901 took note of the pamphlets, then numbering 30,000, which were gathering dust. Considering the items “too valuable to be lost,” they suggested that the trustees set aside \$500 to classify and bind them.²¹² In the fall of 1902, the secretary of the Mitchell Society noted that progress was being made in cataloging the society library.²¹³

The society’s collection greatly augmented the scientific libraries being developed in the laboratories of the biology, chemistry, and geology departments. Members of the Mitchell Society had approved in 1902 that various academic departments on campus could withdraw volumes from the “general library” for placement in departmental libraries.²¹⁴ This arrangement must not have been very successful because Francis Venable noted that the Mitchell collection was still housed in the general library in 1924. He thought that it should “be set apart so as to be directly available for the scientific departments.”²¹⁵

Two years before the library received the Mitchell Society collection, it was given the Thomas F. Wood Collection by Wood’s widow. Thomas Fanning

Wood was a well-known physician in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Wilmington, North Carolina. He was also an accomplished botanist of that region.²¹⁶ He had developed an impressive personal library in his areas of professional interest. Around August 1891, he had donated to the university all the exchanges received by the North Carolina Medical Journal, of which he was editor.²¹⁷ The list of titles included most of the medical publications issued in Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. Appraised at \$400 annually, these works were valuable contributions to the Medical School.^{218, 219} The transfer of Wood’s books to Chapel Hill was completed under the proviso that two scholarships would be established: a university scholarship named the Thomas F. Wood Scholarship and a medical scholarship called the Thomas F. Wood Medical Scholarship, which, according to Kemp Battle was the first of its kind at the university.²²⁰ Wood’s three sons were also to be given free tuition and an exemption of any other fees while attending UNC. Additionally, a Wood scholarship was to be offered to one of Wood’s sons.²²¹

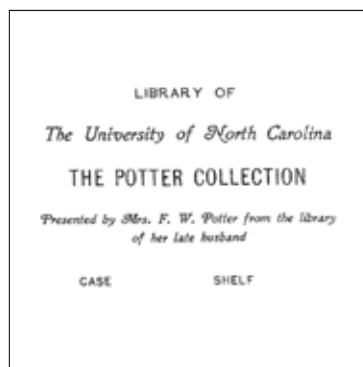
Wood’s family appraised the library gift to the university at \$4,000 –\$5,000.²²² It consisted of 1,200 volumes and 1,500 pamphlets. Although 18 boxes containing books from Wood’s widow remained unopened in mid-February 1893, the books had been cataloged by January 1894.²²³ The pamphlets were not cataloged until proper holders and binding could be procured.²²⁴ Known as “The Wood Collection” (figure 10), the books were shelved separately as a special unit of the University Library. Newly purchased “iron frame cases” would eventually provide shelving for the collection as well as for several thousand other volumes.²²⁵ In later years, the collection was distributed among the university’s various library collections.

Around 1899, the University Library received a third significant collection of medical books. Upon the death of Francis Whitford Potter, a physician who lived in Wilmington, North Carolina, his widow donated his private library and a collection of medical instruments to the university.²²⁶ An inventory of the Potter book donation is recorded in the UNC library accession books, having been entered in the spring of 1899.²²⁷ The collection was also itemized in the April 20, 1899, issue of the *Tar Heel*, but the entries provide only authors’ surnames and keywords of the titles.²²⁸ Known as “the Potter Collection” (figure 11), the donation consisted of 206 volumes.

Conclusion

Between 1795, when the University Library had its humble beginning, and 1902, the Library of the University of North Carolina grew from three modest collections, housed separately around campus to a developing library housed in its own building. The antebellum UNC Library held one of the best collections of scientific literature in the United States due in great part to Joseph

Figure 11. Bookplate of the Potter Collection from UNC’s copy of *The Writings of Hippocrates and Galen*, by John Redman Coxe (1846). (Courtesy of the Rare Book Collection, Health Sciences Library, University of North Carolina).



Caldwell's purchase of books in Europe and the university's purchase of Elisha Mitchell's library. From 1860 to 1875, the acquisition of scientific publications was negligible. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the library increased its collection of scientific and medical literature, and smaller libraries developed by and located in the scientific departments (including a biology collection in the Department of Biology) also began to grow. By 1901, the departmental libraries in law, medicine, chemistry, pharmacy, biology, and geology were constantly used.²²⁹ The departmental science libraries would flourish and develop into pre-eminent collections supporting modern scientific research and education in the natural and physical sciences. The university's libraries were a pivotal factor in the emergence of UNC as a major national university.²³⁰ From its humble beginnings, the library has grown to a collection of more than six million volumes. It provides service through more than a dozen libraries, including medical, biology/chemistry, geology, and math/physics science libraries.

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