

A History of the Missouri Library Commission, 1907-1946

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Introduction

Historically, the state's responsibility for library service has encompassed three groups -- the state government, the state-supported educational institutions, and the public libraries throughout the state. By 1876 every state had a library located at the seat of government and maintained at public expense to serve the legislature, state officials, and the courts. Since the first state-supported colleges and universities were established, the states have recognized their obligation to provide some library service to them. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century, however, that states broadened their concept of library service to include the private citizens of the state. In 1890 in Massachusetts, the first state library commission was established for the purpose of extending library service within the state. Following the early success of the Massachusetts commission, the Missouri Library Commission was established for similar reasons in 1907. This commission was the forerunner of the Missouri State Library as it is known and functions today.

CHAPTER I

The Establishment of the Missouri Library Commission

From a suggestion made by Missouri Senator Charles E. Yeater, a trustee of the Carnegie Library at Sedalia, the movement for the organization of a library association in Missouri grew.¹ Frederick M. Crunden, librarian of the St. Louis Public Library; Carrie Westlake Whitney, on the staff of the Kansas City Public Library; Purd B. Wright, librarian of the St. Joseph Public Library; James T. Gerould, librarian of the University of Missouri; and Senator Yeater were instrumental in calling a meeting to discuss the formation of a library association. On December 18, 1900, at the University of Missouri in Columbia, interested librarians and library trustees met, and at this meeting, the Missouri Library Association was formed.² The delegates determined that the association's purposes would be to aid, encourage, and advance the profession of librarianship; to exchange library opinions and experiences; and to impress library trustees and other educational bodies with the importance of working in cooperation with librarians.³

At this first meeting, Crunden read a paper by Helen Tutt, of the St. Louis Public Library, in which she expressed the need for a state library commission. A letter from Mary E. Perry, of St. Louis, was also read. In it she gave an account of the system of traveling libraries conducted by the Federation of Women's Clubs. The delegates agreed that work such as this should be undertaken by a state library commission. Following the suggestion in Tutt's paper, Crunden appointed a committee, consisting of the Hon. Gardiner Lathrop, of Kansas City; Senator Yeater; and Purd Wright to prepare and present to the Missouri General Assembly a bill calling for the appointment of a state library commission.⁴ It was decided that the primary aim of the Missouri Library Association would be to secure a state library commission.⁵

The committee began its work with vigor by preparing a bill to be introduced to the legislature and an argument to support that bill. The text of the proposed bill is given in appendix A. In the argument, the work of the Massachusetts and Wisconsin library commissions was cited as an example of what could be accomplished in Missouri. Some of the objects of a library commission were also presented; the first object would be to start public libraries in communities which had none. Related to this would be the sending of the commission's traveling libraries to communities to pave the way for permanent self-supporting libraries. Another important task would be to assist and encourage small libraries that were not thriving. Establishing summer library courses to train and instruct librarians and assistants in small libraries would also be proper work for a state library commission.⁶ This argument, in the form of a circular letter, was sent to all members of the state legislature and others involved.⁷

The enthusiastic efforts of the committee were unsuccessful, and Senate Bill 230 of the forty-first General Assembly, 1901, failed to pass.⁸ When this news was reported at the second annual meeting of the Missouri Library Association in October 1901, it was decided to continue the committee. A resolution was introduced, and passed, asking for the cooperation of the Federation of Women's Clubs in securing a commission.⁹ At the third annual meeting, a representative of the Iowa Library Commission spoke on the functions of a library commission. Again it was voted that the library commission committee should continue its work for another year.¹⁰

The library commission bill was not favorably received in 1903 either. At the fourth annual meeting, Mr. Wright reported that House Bill 78 was referred to the committee on education and then transferred to the finance committee. This committee was unwilling to make the necessary appropriation, and the bill was not approved, despite efforts to compromise. The association was

determined, however, and voted that the committee be continued with new members.¹¹

In 1905, the library commission bill was again defeated. Miss Adelaide Thompson, librarian of the Jefferson City Public Library, attributed the defeat to a senatorial fight. She suggested that three men who understood legislation be placed on the committee to introduce the bill.¹² At the seventh annual meeting, the responsibility for appointing new members to the committee was delegated to the incoming president.¹³

This new committee was destined to be successful. Senate Bill 232 of the forty-fourth General Assembly, creating the Missouri Library Commission, was passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Joseph W. Folk on March 20, 1907.¹⁴ The text of this act is given in appendix B. It provided for a commission of five persons: the state superintendent of schools, the president of the state university, and three other persons to be appointed by the governor. An appropriation of \$10,000 for two years was included. The employment of a secretary and other assistants was authorized. Jefferson City was designated as the headquarters for the new commission.¹⁵ Through diligence and persistence, the Missouri Library Association had achieved its primary aim.

CHAPTER II

The Missouri Library Commission, 1907-1916

The first members of the Missouri Library Commission were appointed by Governor Folk on June 24, 1907. They were Adelaide J. Thompson, librarian of the Jefferson City Public Library, to serve six years; Purd B. Wright, librarian of the St. Joseph Public Library, to serve four years; and J.P. Greene, president of William Jewell College, to serve two years.¹⁶ Richard H. Jesse, president of the University of Missouri, and Howard A. Gass, state superintendent of public schools, served as ex officio members.¹⁷ A list of all the members of the commission is given in appendix C.

At ten o'clock on the morning of September 14, 1907, the Commission had its first meeting, which was held in the governor's office at the capitol. Jesse was the only member unable to be present; as his representative he sent Henry O. Severance, librarian of the university. The first order of business was the election of a president. After Greene declined nomination, Wright was unanimously elected president.¹⁸

Throughout its history, many well educated and illustrious people served as members of the commission. A native Missourian, Wright was a newspaper man for some years, but his greatest accomplishments came during his career as a librarian at the St. Joseph and Kansas City public libraries. In 1904, he served as president of the Missouri Library Association, and he was treasurer of the American Library Association in 1908 and 1909.¹⁹ Wright was also a member of the State Historical Society of Missouri. He shares the credit for making the Mark Twain Library of that society one of the most complete in existence. In the 1870s, he began collecting Mark Twain's works while he lived in Hannibal. In 1923 the society purchased his extensive collection which included 135 books, 122 clippings, 979 separate cartoons,

and 174 sheet cartoons. It contained both American and foreign issues of Twain's works.²⁰

The remainder of the morning was spent informally exchanging ideas and discussing how to achieve the objectives of the commission. By law the commission had been given these powers and duties: (1) to give advice to all school, free, and public libraries, and to all communities proposing to establish libraries; (2) to purchase, operate, and circulate traveling libraries to Missouri communities, libraries, schools, colleges, universities, library associations, study clubs, and charitable and penal institutions, free of cost, except for transportation; (3) to conduct summer schools of library instruction; (4) to cooperate with the state library board in caring for school district libraries; (5) to assist teachers in school library administration; (6) to publish informative lists and circulars; (7) to receive gifts of money, books or other property; and (8) to be a clearinghouse for periodicals free to local libraries.²¹

At the afternoon session, the appointment of a secretary was discussed. The members agreed to postpone a decision until they each had read the letters from the six applicants. Before adjourning, Thompson and Gass were assigned to look for quarters for the commission.²²

At the second meeting, held on October 5, 1907, Elizabeth B. Wales of Carthage, Missouri, was elected secretary on the third ballot.²³ She assumed her duties on October 15, 1907.²⁴ (A list of all the secretaries of the commission is given in appendix D.)

Unable to obtain an office in the capitol building, the commission finally found rooms in the capitol annex, which had been occupied by the Missouri Supreme Court. Adapting these rooms cost \$242.70; and equipping the rooms cost an additional \$303.18. Several hundred dollars were saved, however, by the generosity of the court which gave the commission some furnishings, including bookcases, that remained in the building.²⁵

The commissioners decided that organizing and circulating the traveling libraries was their first duty. A letter from

Caroline G. Carpenter, chairman of the traveling libraries bureau of the Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, was received in which she stated that her organization had decided to donate its libraries, list of clients, and relevant correspondence and records to the commission.²⁶ The Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs had organized the first system of traveling libraries in Missouri. In 1898, a bureau of traveling libraries was created to which the members generously contributed books and money. In March 1899, the first traveling library was sent out; it went to the village of Montrose in Henry County. By November 1899, there were seventeen libraries in circulation. For nine years the work continued with new cases of books added until there were twenty-six traveling libraries totaling approximately 1,300 volumes.²⁷ The gift of these books was gratefully accepted by the commission. As the books, which were in fine condition, arrived at the commission's office, a complete card list of the titles was made and filed.²⁸

It was decided that the money left after purchasing equipment and furnishings would be used to buy books. To insure purchasing books of good quality which were relevant to the varied needs and interests of Missourians, booklists were prepared for several different categories. The recommended list of the Missouri Department of Education was approved as the basis for purchasing books for traveling libraries sent to schools; the purchase of ten duplicate copies of each of the required supplementary books was also approved. Wales prepared a list of children's books; Wright, agricultural books and reference books; Gass, books for teachers; and Greene, non-denominational Christian books for preachers. The secretary was authorized to get bids for the entire list of books and to order them from the lowest bidder, upon the approval of Thompson and Gass.

Finally, it was decided to purchase 2,500 volumes (five copies each of five hundred titles) of general literature for juveniles and adults to comprise fifty new traveling libraries. Selected purchases were made of books on agriculture, domestic

science, teaching, and Christianity totaling 425 volumes. From the "Recommended List of Books for Rural and Graded Schools," 743 volumes were purchased covering all the books recommended for grades one to eight; in addition, ten sets of the required supplementary books and a collection of general reference books and books on questions of the day (for debating clubs) -- about 150 volumes in all -- were also purchased. Of the appropriation of \$5,000.00 for 1907, \$4,989.60 was spent, of which \$3,565.51 was for books for the traveling libraries. (A table of the commission's appropriations and expenditures is given in appendix E.) The new books, added to the books donated by the Federation of Women's Clubs, gave the commission a collection of five thousand volumes with which to begin work in 1908. Through a system of exchange, the commission also received the publications of eighteen other state library commissions.³⁰

Under the system established by the commission, a traveling library was loaned to any community which requested it and was able to pay the shipping costs. Several libraries went out from the commission as early as December 1907, and fourteen other requests were waiting to be filled. In 1906, the Federation of Women's Clubs maintained twelve active traveling library stations. During the transitional period of late 1907, it was still possible to maintain twelve active stations.³¹ A booklet describing the service, Traveling Libraries; What They Are and How to Secure Them, was prepared and distributed in early 1908.³²

In order to know the library situation in Missouri, the commission attempted to gather some simple statistics for its first annual report. The commission continued to collect statistics on all Missouri libraries and included them in every annual report. Questionnaires were sent to approximately 120 libraries, excluding school libraries which were covered in the report of the education department. Answers were received from seventy libraries, but some were incomplete; six libraries were reported suspended or not found and two refused flatly to answer the questionnaire. The answers obtained showed that there were

thirty-one school and college libraries, five normal school libraries, fourteen society libraries, one private library (open to the public), and nineteen public libraries. There were twelve Carnegie library buildings and four buildings donated by private individuals. Of the libraries reporting, twenty owned their own buildings which had been funded by bond issue, subscription, or general donation. Only a few of the college libraries were housed in separate buildings.³³

According to the commission's by-laws, a president and a secretary were to be elected at the January meeting. In 1908, it was voted to retain Wright as president and Wales as secretary.³⁴ Later that year when the stenographer resigned, the commissioners decided to replace her with a library assistant knowledgeable in library techniques.³⁵

During the year, Albert Ross Hill succeeded Jesse as an ex officio member. Hill was born in the province of Nova Scotia, Canada. He graduated from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. After teaching in the rural schools of Nova Scotia, he became a professor of psychology and education. He was president of the University of Missouri until 1921.³⁶

The organization and circulation of traveling libraries was the most important work of the commission in 1908. Assembling the newly purchased books into distinct traveling collections and preparing them for circulation was an enormous task. Whenever they could be obtained, Library of Congress cards were used. Simple cataloging was done for all the collections except the schools sets; full analytical work was done for these books, and cards were ordered in duplicate.³⁷ Graded traveling libraries, covering the eight years of the required school course, were assembled; a small card catalog of author, title, and subject cards in dictionary order was sent with each graded library. In addition to their obvious practical purpose, the catalogs were sent to serve as an example for making similar catalogs in small school libraries.³⁸

In all, about one hundred traveling libraries were assembled by the commission. During 1908, 144 libraries were circulated, including 51 to associations of taxpayers, 14 to rural schools, 7 to study clubs, and 4 to county school superintendents for teachers to use. (Circulation statistics for 1907-1946 are given in appendix F.) Communications were opened with seventy-nine counties, and traveling library stations were established in fifty-two of them; forty-seven of these stations were in towns of less than five hundred residents. Rural areas of Missouri especially needed the traveling libraries. Many requests for books on special subjects were received from debating societies and other clubs, but the limited number of books made it impossible to fill all the requests. The commission also received its first request from a state institution; in December a special library was assembled and sent to State Hospital No. 3 in Nevada, Missouri. In the first full year of operation, the commission's work had a good start as the popularity of the traveling libraries increased.³⁹

The commission was authorized to give advice to libraries and to communities desiring libraries; in 1908, the commission began to do this work. The commission recognized the value of personal visits by its staff to Missouri towns, especially to those in isolated rural areas. A personal visit brought encouragement to the town and gave insight to the one who was sent to advise. This service was initially called advisory work and later, field or extension work. The first year extension work ranged from raising interest in traveling libraries by giving talks to community groups to giving technical assistance to struggling libraries. In one instance Wales helped a local women's club establish a public library in Fulton.⁴⁰

Unfortunately, the secretary was not always successful. Although she assisted in cataloging the small collection of a fledgling library in Wentzville, the library did not survive more than three months.⁴¹ Because she had limited time to spend on

extension work, the secretary was only able to make about two dozen personal visits.

In 1908 the commission initiated another phase of its work by conducting some lectures in library skills. Four lectures were planned to be given at each of the five normal schools and at the teacher's college of the state university by librarians from Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin were planned and announced for summer 1908.⁴² Regrettably, lack of funds forced the commission to cancel the program after lectures had been given at only two normal schools -- Springfield and Cape Girardeau.⁴³ At the state university in Columbia, Mr. Severance and his staff conducted a nine week elementary course in library science covering reference and technical work. Five girls began the class, but one withdrew to take a job and another succumbed to the "throes of cataloging."⁴⁴

By the end of 1908, it was clear that need demanded the work be extended in all areas. In addition, the commission recommended that a new department, legislative reference, be created. Successfully established in many other states, this department would furnish the variety of special information needed by legislators and state officials.⁴⁵

When the legislative session of 1909 opened, the secretary of the commission began a general subject index of the bills presented in order to be able to supply information readily concerning the subjects before the General Assembly. By the end of the first month, some members of the House requested that they be supplied with duplicates of this list. The first issue of the index was delivered to them in February, and periodic supplements were issued until the twentieth of March. Meanwhile, requests for an index of engrossed bills were received, and the commission agreed to make one. Each member of the House automatically received issues of the general index; the index to engrossed bills was supplied to individual members of the House and Senate upon specific request.⁴⁶

The commission had demonstrated, to a small degree, how it could serve state government. Apparently the legislators were pleased, because the General Assembly of 1909 passed a bill (H.B. 173) creating a library of the General Assembly to consist of legislative journals, state documents, and any other useful materials. During legislative sessions the library was to be supervised by the commission's secretary under the direction of the House and Senate. At other times, the commission was to have sole charge of the library.⁴⁷

Developing a collection for the General Assembly Library was difficult for several reasons, lack of any appropriation being the primary one.⁴⁸ The commission was forced to use part of its own book fund to purchase equipment and subscribe to the legislative index from which a card was received for every bill introduced in any state legislature during 1910.⁴⁹ The secretary of state was able to provide only forty-eight volumes of Senate and House journals and twenty-eight volumes of appendixes -- an inadequate number; however, the library of the Missouri Supreme Court offered the use of its more complete collection. The commission sent personal letters to the legislators to find out, in advance, each one's areas of interest. Material on these subjects was gathered before the next session began.⁵⁰

A significant development in 1910 was the employment of an assistant to work exclusively in the field. That summer Mary P. Farr was hired as library organizer to travel extensively throughout the state, establishing traveling library stations and helping to develop libraries. It was the commission's intention that Farr's traveling expenses would be paid from the travel fund, not from her salary. When she presented her first bill for traveling expenses, however, the auditor refused to pay it, saying that the appropriation bill only permitted traveling expenses to the commissioners and the secretary. On July 26, 1910, the state attorney general upheld this contention. At that time, Farr was in the field and had two months' work firmly planned. She was forced to cancel all but the most urgent work.

At a special meeting August 30, 1910, the commission resolved the matter by accepting the resignation of the secretary, Wales, and appointing Farr as secretary, but assigning her the same duties she had previously. Wales was then appointed librarian and deputy secretary.⁵¹

During the seven months of 1910 in which Farr worked, the value of a special field worker became evident. Farr tackled her work county by county. Regrettably she was able to visit thoroughly only four counties (Callaway, Howell, Pike, and Webster) due to the money trouble and the interruption it caused. In each county, she spent several weeks visiting the communities, meeting the prominent people, explaining the commission's work, and generating enthusiasm for libraries and reading. Other counties were reached by personal interviews with representatives and quick trips to a few towns. In 1910, 141 places were reached by traveling libraries, an increase of fifty-one over 1909, and 242 traveling libraries were sent out, sixty-nine more than in 1909.⁵² These increases were largely due to the efforts of Farr.

In January 1910, Greene was elected president of the commission.⁵³ Later in the year, when Wright resigned, the governor appointed Arthur E. Bostwick, librarian of the St. Louis Public Library, to replace him.⁵⁴ Bostwick was a man with comprehensive interests. He was not only a librarian, he was an author and editor, an educator, and a leader in many areas. Educated at Yale University, he worked for a number of years in New York libraries, before coming to St. Louis. He served as president of the New York State, Missouri, and American library associations. His affiliations with a variety of other organizations reflected his interest in science, art, foreign policy and current affairs, and literature and writing. From 1925 to 1942 he was an honorary director of the Library Association of China. By the invitation of the Chinese Association for the Advancement of Education, he went to China in 1925 to inspect Chinese libraries.⁵⁵

The next year (1911) Bostwick was elected president of the commission. Mrs. W.K. James of St. Joseph was appointed to replace Thompson, who left Missouri, and W.P. Evans, state superintendent of public schools, became an ex officio member, succeeding Howard Gass.⁵⁶

On February 5, 1911, the capitol building was destroyed by fire. The commission was forced to move from the capitol annex and establish a temporary office in the basement of the local public library. There was not enough room here, and the commission moved to rented rooms in the Hess building on the corner of High and Washington streets.⁵⁷

The confusion of moving twice had a disruptive effect on the commission's work that year; circulation of the traveling libraries did not return to normal until September. Furthermore, the appropriation for the biennial period 1911-1912 did not provide for a special field worker. Wales, who was reappointed secretary, had to assume the duties of field worker. Her limited time kept field work at a minimum. One innovation was tried; an exhibition of traveling libraries at four county fairs directly resulted in nineteen traveling libraries being sent to those four counties.⁵⁸

In the area of legislative reference work, both the House and Senate passed resolutions ordering the state printer to supply the commission with twenty-five copies of every bill presented. The House also passed a resolution providing for the printing of an index of bills prepared by the commission; the legislators found this index convenient. A library clerk from each house was required by the bill of 1909. Although the Senate appointed a clerk, the fire halted further progress.⁵⁹

Using its own funds, the commission hired a legislative reference clerk, Joseph F. Marron, a graduate of the School of Social Economy in St. Louis. He began work on November 1, 1912 and soon received 125 requests on 75 different subjects from 45 legislators. About twelve hundred pamphlets and reports on

legislative subjects were collected. Marron answered some of the requests by using the library of the Missouri Supreme Court.⁶⁰

In 1912, the commission, the University of Missouri, and the St. Louis Public Library cooperated to offer the first summer library school. It lasted six weeks and offered four hours of credit toward a bachelor's degree in education. The three courses given were: (1) cataloging and classification, two credit hours; (2) administration of school libraries, one credit hour; and (3) reference and book selection, one credit hour. This cooperative venture was undertaken again in 1914, 1916, and 1918. The same three courses were offered, but they carried two credit hours each. The director of these summer schools was Henry O. Severance, librarian of the university; Elizabeth Wales assisted him.⁶¹

Late in March 1913, the commission moved back to its former rooms in the capitol annex, but less than a month later, it was ordered out in favor of the Public Utilities Commission. A house on Washington Street, owned by the state, became the new headquarters, but arrangements were not completely settled until October. Cramped quarters and delays in moving prevented as much progress as desired in some areas, such as the acquisition of books and field work, but public libraries took a step forward. In Mexico, Missouri, a new public library building was completed. During the year five other cities accepted the offers of Carnegie buildings.⁶²

One change was made in the commission's membership in 1913. The legislature did not confirm Governor Hadley's appointment of Mrs. W.K. James, and Howard Gass was appointed to fill the vacancy.⁶³

Another noteworthy thing happened in 1913. The commission began to publish a bulletin, entitled the Library Messenger, to be a medium of communication between libraries in Missouri. Only one issue appeared that year, because the staff was involved in moving.⁶⁴

No attempt was made in 1914 to develop the legislative reference collection; it was simply maintained by continuing the same periodical subscriptions, classifying any pamphlets received, and clipping bulletins of the Public Affairs Information Service.⁶⁵ Beginning December 1, 1914, Earl H. Davis was employed by the commission to prepare for the upcoming legislative session. Letters were sent again to the legislators, and materials were gathered to answer their requests. During the session the index of bills was prepared, printed, and issued weekly. Each week files of all the bills received (during the week) were sent to ten public libraries in Missouri, the National Legislative Information Service, the Public Affairs Information Service, and the Texas State Library. Cooperation with legislative reference departments in other states provided valuable information otherwise difficult to obtain. Early in the session Davis was placed on the payroll of the General Assembly, and one clerk was assigned to work with him. They remained one month after the close of the session to organize the collection and were able to accomplish much work.⁶⁶

During 1914 the emphasis was on organizing school libraries. Requests for help in systematically arranging books were received from forty-seven school libraries. The commission staff answered by mailing them typewritten explanations of classification, card indexing, charging systems, and so forth. It was the earnest desire of the commission to send a special organizer to each school, but the nagging problem of limited funds prevented it.⁶⁷

In early 1914, it was suggested that the commission collect and arrange a library of Missouri authors for the Panama Exposition. The exposition committee offered to provide an exhibition room, protection, and insurance. The commission approved the idea and decided to include law books and textbooks as well as others.⁶⁸

At the exposition, the 1,282 volumes were displayed in wall cases with glass doors in a beautiful room on the main floor of the Missouri Building. Most of the books were loaned from the

State Historical Society; many were loaned from the St. Louis Public Library. About forty volumes were presented by their authors. Mrs. F.J. Cutter, of St. Louis, loaned fifty autographed copies of titles not otherwise represented. Harper Brothers loaned a complete set of Mark Twain's works, and Scribner's Sons loaned the works of Eugene Field in the Sabine edition. Post card pictures of the Missouri Building, supplied by the exposition committee, and an account of the exhibition library were sent to all public libraries in Missouri.⁶⁹

Widespread circulation of the traveling libraries in 1916 exemplified the growing appreciation of this service. In fact, demand was greater than the commission could handle. Thirty-eight groups of citizens could not be promptly served due to the limited supply of books.⁷⁰

In the years 1907 through 1916, the commission staff made 216 visits.⁷¹ Undoubtedly, many more could have been made if the commission had been given a large enough appropriation to hire a fulltime extension librarian. Despite this, some steady progress was made in the circulation of books and the encouragement of public libraries. In 1907 there were eighteen public libraries in Missouri. By the end of 1916 there were fifty-seven. Twelve traveling libraries were stationed in rural Missouri in 1907. There were 277 stations, which served 403 different places, in 1916.⁷² During the first ten years, every county in Missouri had at least one traveling library. In 1907 through 1916, a total of 107,762 volumes were circulated by traveling library stations.⁷³

The circulation of special classes of books, such as, agriculture books, developed over the ten years. These books were taken from the general loan collection, which was classified and used much like a public library's collection to meet individual needs. In 1909, 189 volumes were loaned this way; in 1915 and 1916, 1,055 volumes were loaned.⁷⁴

CHAPTER III

The Missouri Library Commission in the Library War Service

The commission and the libraries of Missouri performed two important services during World War I. Providing books to the soldiers and sailors was one, and providing information to the civilian population was the other.

The Library War Service of the American Library Association was organized along national lines. The nation was subdivided by states for the purposes of administering the program, raising needed funds, and collecting books. The Library War Service could not begin to function until books and magazines were collected. In August 1917, a campaign for books was launched before the large training camps were officially opened. Newspapers published the request for new magazines and readable books in good condition. This campaign supplied the reading matter needed immediately in the camps as the men assembled. A second campaign, more efficiently organized, was begun in March 1918 and had more satisfactory results. Missouri contributed 82,787 books to this campaign. A final campaign was inaugurated in 1919. At this time, the soldiers needed recent vocational books, but comparatively few books of this type were donated. The Library War Service purchased vocational books with the funds from the United War Fund and sent them overseas and to the camps in the United States.⁷⁵

Missouri citizens also contributed generously to the campaigns for funds. To the Library War Service's million dollar campaign in the fall of 1917, Missouri contributed \$21,634.01. In the United War Work Campaign for all the welfare organizations, including the Library War Service, Missouri donated \$5,445,406.22, of which the Library War Service received about \$111,630.⁷⁶

In Missouri, Elizabeth Wales, secretary of the commission, directed the campaigns for books and money. Under her were Purd Wright, director of western Missouri, and Arthur Bostwick, director of eastern Missouri. In July 1917, following the suggestion of the American Library Association, the libraries in Missouri began collecting from their patrons gifts of books for camp libraries. During the campaign for money in the fall of 1917, letters were sent from the commission office to each public library every week.⁷⁷ The week of March 11-18, 1918, was devoted to collecting books for camp libraries. For five weeks the commission handled thousands of supplies and again sent weekly letters to every library in the state.⁷⁸

The commission also provided information to civilians. In August 1917, the library of the United States Department of Agriculture requested the cooperation of libraries in publicizing government information. This work soon settled around the food situation. Cooperating with the Good Administration, the commission tried to make every library in Missouri a distribution point. In November and December 1917, hundreds of pamphlets were sent out from the commission office. The commission received and mounted seventy-five photographs of food exhibition work for circulation as an exhibit among Missouri libraries. Miss Wales accepted the request of Dean F. B. Mumford, Federal Food Administrator for Missouri, to be the chairman of the library publicity committee in Missouri. The commission began to send letters and pamphlets on food conservation to one hundred libraries each week. The circulation of food information was extended in 1918; fifty-six Missouri libraries agreed to distribute food pamphlets directly to their patrons. The commission ordered six thousand copies of various pamphlets and forwarded them to cooperating libraries.⁷⁹

Throughout the war, the Library Messenger informed librarians of the ways they could serve. Information about the book and fund campaigns and suggestions for promoting food conservation and providing war information were featured. The

libraries of Missouri participated in these activities which put a new and different interpretation on the purpose of the public library.

When the war was over, the books for the soldiers, many on vocational subjects, were distributed to library commissions. The Missouri Library Commission received 5,750 volumes. Many of these books were made into traveling libraries which were loaned to American Legion posts in towns without library service. Some books were sent to veterans' hospitals. In some cases, booklists were sent directly to the men requesting them to check the titles of books in which they would be interested and to return the list. The commission sent the books to them as quickly as possible.⁸⁰ In these ways, the commission was fairly successful in providing vocational books to the soldiers arriving home.

During the war the commission also carried on its regular activities. On November 20, 1917, the commission moved to its offices in the new capitol building. Three rooms at the north end of the west corridor on the ground floor were assigned to the commission. A large basement room was also provided for packing and shipping. Shelving in the stack room was not installed until August 1918.⁸¹

In 1917, Curtis E. Chrane, superintendent of city schools in Boonville, was appointed to the commission. At the same time, Purd Wright was again appointed to replace Dr. Bostwick whose term had expired, but he could not accept, and Ward H. Edwards, librarian at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, was appointed instead.⁸²

The General Assembly withdrew its appropriation for the legislative reference department, leaving it without financial resources; the commission staff was already overburdened with work making it impossible to assume this added service. That the legislators were utilizing the services of this department was evidence that the work was valuable. For this reason the commission wanted to provide this service during the extra session of 1918.⁸³ It was decided finally that the commission

would reserve from its fund \$375 for this purpose. This amount included the salary of an assistant to be employed for two months. The commission hoped that the success of the library would induce the General Assembly to reimburse the money.⁸⁴

In August 1918, the commission decided to hire R.C. Joyney as librarian of the legislative reference library beginning September 1, 1918, for the last four months of the year at a salary of two thousand dollars a year, and for the ensuing biennial period at the same salary, providing the legislative appropriation was sufficient.⁸⁵

Mr. Journey began work that September in the new room for the legislative library at the capitol. The usual preparations were made. The opening of the session was hectic, and an assistant, C.L. Northcutt, was employed. On February 1, 1919, Ethel Latshaw was hired as a stenographer. Fifteen numbers of the index were issued during the session. At its close, Northcutt and Latshaw remained for one month to draft a digest of bills passed and signed by the governor. This digest was published in June 1919 by the commission. One thousand copies were not enough to satisfy the demand.⁸⁶

During the war, Missouri libraries were faced with a challenge, and a new dimension was added to library service. Responding to the request of the federal government and the needs of the people, Missouri libraries became centers of current information for the public. The commission met the challenge of supervising this service. More people became aware of what libraries can do for them. As the result of providing books to servicemen and information to civilians, Missouri libraries made new friends and supporters. The commission knew this and hoped that public libraries in Missouri would finally come into their own.

CHAPTER IV

The Missouri Library Commission, 1920-1935

Elizabeth Wales, who served as the secretary of the commission for thirteen years, resigned March 31, 1920. For the next five months the manager of the traveling library department, Inez Benedict, performed the secretary's duties. On September 1, 1920, Irving R. Bundy assumed the position of secretary. Also in 1920, Ward Edwards was elected president of the commission.⁸⁷

By 1920 the collection for traveling libraries contained 25,027 books. The collection was divided into three large groups: (1) general books intended for general community reading; (2) books to supplement school libraries; and (3) many small special groups containing books on specific subjects. Books were loaned for three months, with a renewal privilege of three months. Of the 546 requests answered in 1920, 230 were from new localities.⁸⁸

For several years librarians in Missouri had been working to have a county library law passed. In 1921 this goal was finally achieved. A county library bill was introduced in the House and in the Senate. These were referred to the House Committee on Libraries and the Senate Committee on Education. Opposition to one of the sections developed in the Senate committee, and the bill was reported adversely. Fortunately, the section was rephrased to the satisfaction of the committee without really changing its effect. The House committee reported it favorably, and it passed the House on March 12, 1921. It finally passed the Senate on March 19, 1921, the last day of the session. Governor Hyde signed it on March 29, 1921.⁸⁹

Section ten provided that county libraries would be visited by representatives of the commission to survey their condition and give assistance.⁹⁰ As soon as the bill became law the commission prepared several mimeographed articles encouraging the

establishment of county libraries; the articles were mailed to anyone who requested them.⁹¹

A bill providing for the establishment of a permanent and adequate legislative reference library was introduced in the House at the same session. It passed the House, but it was killed in the Senate. Bundy and two clerks tried to continue the legislative reference work as it had been done previously.⁹²

The secretary decided that more publicity was needed for the commission. Two news articles were sent to one newspaper in each county, and about six articles were released to the Associated Press. Other articles were mimeographed and mailed, with applications for traveling libraries, to parent-teacher associations, country preachers, county agriculture agents, county superintendents, and state legislators.⁹³ The increase in the number of traveling libraries sent out and books loaned to individuals was attributed to the publicity campaign. In 1921, only one county did not receive a loan of books from the commission.⁹⁴

Publicity efforts were continued for the next few years, and the results were measurable. In 1922, 3,000 more books were circulated than in 1921, and an increasing proportion of the circulation consisted of loans to individuals.⁹⁵ Service to individuals meant more time had to be spent selecting the right book and preparing it for shipment; this was expensive in terms of money and staff time, and neither the appropriation or the staff was increasing. In fact, the appropriation for 1923-1924 was cut to \$3,650 less than it was in 1921, although requests had increased dramatically.⁹⁶

The drastic budget cut forced the commission to curtail its work sharply. In 1922, the secretary had conducted a series of district conferences in various parts of the state. The average attendance of five to ten librarians and assistants contributed to the informal atmosphere conducive to worthwhile discussions of library problems.⁹⁷ The conferences were so successful the

commission had planned to hold them every year, but this was impossible with the changed financial situation.

Publication of the Library Messenger was discontinued at the end of 1922, because its funds were needed for the absolutely essential work of the commission. In 1923, many libraries asked for someone to come and direct the cataloging of their books, but the secretary could not make any trips because the travel fund was at bare minimum.⁹⁸

During 1923 and 1924, the commission concentrated its effort on circulating books to clubs, schools, and citizens not served by public libraries. In response to public demand, circulation grew considerably in 1924. The book stock, while high in quality, was deficient in quantity -- 25,572 volumes.⁹⁹

Due to neglect, the legislative reference library had become inadequate. It was open only during the session and was staffed by two inexperienced clerks. The commission recommended that a librarian and a stenographer be employed there permanently.¹⁰⁰

The commission's secretary, Irving R. Bundy, resigned in February 1924 to take charge of the public library in St. Joseph, Missouri. On June first, Jane Morey became the new secretary.¹⁰¹

The secretary was able to visit ten libraries during the year. About three hundred rural schools had traveling libraries of thirty to fifty books which were loaned to them for the entire year. Unfortunately, almost as many requests had to be refused because the supply of books was exhausted. Since 1921, total requests and shipments had increased two hundred and twenty percent, but the commission's staff had decreased.¹⁰²

In 1926 the commission continued to operate on a small budget, and the only work that showed any progress was the circulation of books. Since 1921, financial support had decreased nearly seventeen percent.¹⁰³ Extension work was reluctantly, but necessarily, neglected, despite calls for assistance from around the state.

During the year the commission did extend itself in a new way. The secretary gave some radio talks on books and the

commission's purposes; she also told some stories for the children's hour.¹⁰⁴

A mimeographed newsletter was sent monthly to all libraries in Missouri to keep them informed of library activities in the state and give them suggestions for improvement.¹⁰⁵ The commission hoped to resume some day publication of the Library Messenger, but this never happened. The brief newsletter continued to be the regular medium of communication.

The year 1927 marked the twentieth year the commission had served Missouri. The commission's first library survey (in 1907) showed there were nineteen well-established, tax-supported public libraries in Missouri; in 1927 there were forty-five, but this was not nearly enough, because fifty-five percent of the state's citizens remained unserved. They lived on farms or in rural communities, and they depended on the commission for library service.¹⁰⁵ During the winter, the commission had requests for over seven hundred volumes that were not filled immediately because there was a shortage of books.¹⁰⁶

In 1928 Missouri still did not have a county library, although every state bordering her had county libraries.¹⁰⁷ The commission endorsed the county library as the only economical and efficient type of library service in a rural state, but the commission did not have a library organizer who could devote full time to establishing county libraries. It was not because the commissioners did not try to get one; with every request for an increased appropriation, arguments were presented explaining the need, the value of an extension librarian.

The commission did receive an increase in appropriations for 1929 and 1930. It was enough to employ a reference librarian needed to help answer requests from individuals. On September 15, 1929, Margaret McDonald, previously with the St. Joseph and St. Louis public libraries, assumed that position.¹⁰⁸ Even with this addition the commission barely kept up with the requests.

The activities of the commission increased gradually in 1930. The secretary was able to make forty-seven visits to a

total of thirty-nine towns; she assisted with the organization, reorganization, cataloging, and so forth, at several libraries.¹⁰⁹

More was done this year than ever before for the state institutions. A visit was made to the Missouri Reformatory at Boonville, and a plan for traveling library service was arranged with the chaplain, who also served as librarian. The chaplain resigned later, however, and the plans never matured. Several visits were made to the prison library in Jefferson City, and the commission began to supplement that collection with nonfiction titles requested by the inmates. The library of the state hospital in Nevada was reorganized, and the collection was increased. The commission also loaned books to the hospital to supplement its collection.¹¹⁰

The commission's office was moved to the fourth floor of the capitol building because of the crowded conditions. This was inconvenient and inefficient because the stacks and the shipping room were still located on the lower floors.¹¹¹

Margaret McDonald, reference librarian, resigned in August 1931 to return to the staff of the St. Louis Public Library. Ruth O'Malley, a branch librarian at the St. Joseph Public Library, was hired as reference librarian. She graduated from St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana, and had one year of graduate work in the library school at Albany, New York.¹¹² A slight increase in the appropriation for salaries allowed the commission to employ a trained library assistant, Ruth Knoll of Wellston.¹¹³ The increase in work left the commission still understaffed.

Any increase in appropriation was short-lived, however. In November 1931, with eleven months of the biennium past, it was found that the state revenue would be twenty-six percent lower than estimated. Consequently, the commission's budget was reduced by about forty percent for 1932. The fund for books, periodicals, and office equipment was reduced to \$336 from an anticipated \$3,500. Only 237 new books were added to the collection, and most of these were gifts from the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, staff members, borrowers, and the state department of education. The

staff did not lose any members in 1932, but the salaries were cut.¹¹⁴

In this depression year, 10,159 requests for books were answered--an increase of twenty-five percent. As most books were read by neighborhood groups and several members of each family, the commission estimated that 300,000 books were read in 1932. Many requests had to be refused due to the insufficient book stock. People were turning to libraries as never before for information, study, and entertainment during these days of "enforced leisure."¹¹⁵

One new service was added. Books printed in large type, furnished by the Missouri Commission for the Blind, were circulated by the commission to children who were unable to read the ordinary textbooks.¹¹⁶ The commission continued this service during the remainder of its existence.

In 1933 the commission was faced with a serious crisis. During the General Assembly of 1933, House Bill No. 5 was introduced; it provided for abolishing the commission.¹¹⁷ (A copy of House Bill No. 5 is given in Appendix G.) For a period of three months the continued existence of the commission was uncertain. The bill was read for the first time on January 17, 1933, after which it was referred to the House Committee on Consolidations and Boards. This committee recommended that the bill pass. The bill was intended to stop the work entirely and store the books and equipment; however, it was amended in the House, with the consent of the governor, to repeal the law, but transfer the commission's functions to the Board of the Permanent Seat of Government. Still later, the governor approved an amendment to transfer the functions to the curators of the University of Missouri. This amendment transferred the property to the university, but it did not include a provision for carrying on the work. Through the efforts of Senator Titus of Joplin and other friends of the commission, the bill failed to pass, although it was brought up a second time.¹¹⁸

The commission's problems did not end there. The Senate Appropriations Committee wanted to give the commission an appropriation that would only extend to April 30, 1933. This failed to pass, but the House appropriation of \$15,000 was cut to \$13,540. This reduced figure passed both House and Senate. Then, another disaster almost happened. The enrolling force of the House copied the Senate committee amendment which carried the date April 30, 1933, instead of the amendment that finally passed. Fortunately, the Senate clerk discovered the error and corrected it before the bill was signed. After all this, the chairman of the Senate Appropriation Committee was called in by the governor to help reduce all the state appropriations.¹¹⁹ The commission realized that it would suffer another cut. Finally, an appropriation was granted that was only \$862.50 more than the amount provided in 1907, when the commission was first organized.¹²⁰

As the result of this drastic reduction in its appropriation, the commission lost staff members. After the first of April it was necessary to give up the stenographer. At the same time, the cataloger took a leave of absence and eventually resigned to work at the Kirkwood Public Library. In June the secretary, Jane Morey, resigned effective August 1, and Ruth O'Malley, the reference librarian, assumed the secretary's position.¹²¹

For a short period in April, no books were sent out due to the crisis. No fiction was sent to individuals, except for use in club reviews. During December thirty-one requests for traveling libraries could not be filled. In November thirty-three requests were delayed because the staff of only three persons did not have time to answer them. Total circulation in 1933 decreased by 7,193 books.¹²² Of course, it was not possible to make any trips during the year.

Luella St. Clair Moss, a prominent member of the Federated Women's Clubs of Missouri, was appointed by Gov. Guy B. Park to succeed Elizabeth Summersby, whose term expired July 1, 1933.¹²³

By the first of January 1934, lack of funds made it necessary for the commission to give up the library assistant, Ruth Knoll. The staff was reduced to only the secretary, Ruth O'Malley, and the shipping clerk, Harvey Lutzenberger. Fortunately, some workers were obtained temporarily from the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA).¹²⁴

When the CWA aid was withdrawn, it became impossible to answer requests. The commission decided to discontinue service to individuals, schools, and communities until September 1, at which time traveling library service to communities and schools was resumed.¹²⁵ In September new workers were obtained through the FERA office.

The Circulation decreased over forty percent in 1934. Few additions or replacements were made to the book collection; instead, more time than usual was spent repairing badly worn books.¹²⁶ Making visits to help libraries was out of the question.

In early January 1934 the Missouri Library Association launched a plan of voluntary certification for librarians and library workers. Missouri librarians and trustees received a preliminary letter stating the advantages of certification. In late January, a cover letter explaining the plan of voluntary certification, the schedule of qualifications, and an application blank were mailed to the librarians and trustees. Ruth O'Malley, secretary of the commission, was secretary of the Board of Certification, which met twice a year to consider applications. By November 1934, 400 Missouri librarians had qualified.¹²⁷ The commission had received the services of two professional librarians, a stenographer, and several book menders from the FERA in 1934; these services were terminated on February 1, 1935. Temporary arrangements were made to keep the librarians and stenographer. At the first meeting of the commission, after the passage of its new appropriation in 1935, Elizabeth Sanderson was appointed reference librarian and (Miss) Johnnie Riner was

appointed cataloger; both women were qualified graduate librarians.¹²⁸

In 1935 the commissions' book service began to return to normal with 2,756 requests from individuals answered, in addition to request from communities, schools, and study clubs. Although 650 books were added to the collection, making a total of 36,021 volumes, the unpreventable neglect of the previous few years left the collection in dire need of rebuilding.¹²⁹

Ward Edwards's term expired in June 1935; he had been a member of the commission since 1918 and had served as its president since 1920. The vacancy was filled by the appointment of Emily Lewis. Luella St. Clair Moss was elected president.¹³⁰

Moss, active in education and current affairs, was a president of Christian College (now named Columbia College) in Columbia, Missouri. She was present at the first formal meeting of a group of Columbia citizens who were interested in supporting suffrage for women. At that meeting, on November 16, 1912, Richard H. Gesse was elected president and Luella Moss was elected vice president. Jesse and Moss visited the Missouri legislature on behalf of suffrage for women. The Columbia group was concerned with citizenship schools and courses of lectures on the principles of government and political history and methods. Mrs. Moss was an active worker in the citizenship schools.¹³¹

When a bronze tablet was erected in Washington, D.C., by the National League of Women Voters, to honor the women who were pioneers in the movement for suffrage and in the development of methods for its effective use, the names of twenty-six Missouri women were on it. One of those names was Luella St. Clair Moss.¹³²

The period 1915 through 1935 was one of ups and downs for the commission. Individual loans to people who did not have access to public libraries became one of the major services given by the commission. The circulation of books increased steadily, reaching a peak in 1932 (60,301 books), and then declined in 1933 and 1934 to a lower number (30,241 books) than circulated in 1925.¹³³ The number of requests answered followed the same trend.

These declining trends did not mean that this service was needed less, or that people were reading fewer books, or that the commission had achieved its goal. The trend in expenditures--synonymous with appropriations--was the key. Expenditures simply did not keep pace with the service the commission was giving; little ground had been gained, in terms of appropriations during the commission's existence thus far. The appropriation declined from \$13,250.00 for 1921 to \$11,000.00 for 1926 to only \$5,431.25 for 1933.¹³⁴ (The appropriation in 1907 was \$5,000.) With funds severely curtailed, the number of request that could be answered by the small staff declined, and individual borrowers suffered most. It was ironic because during the depression people wanted and needed library service more than ever.

The function of library extension almost ceased during this period. Extension work should have been one of the most important functions, if not the most important. Yet, the annual reports consistently indicated that financial limitations hindered, or even sometimes prevented, this work.

During the depression no support was given by the General Assembly for carrying on the duties of the legislative reference department. Whenever possible the secretary tried to answer questions received from legislative reference librarians in other states.¹³⁵

Just when the commission was beginning to make some progress -- circulating more books and increasing its staff -- the nationwide economic depression hit, and as a direct result, the commission suffered serious setbacks in all areas.

CHAPTER V

The Missouri Library Commission, 1936-1946

As the commission began to recover from the period of decline, one of the objectives was the establishment of a weekly radio broadcast. The purpose of the radio program was to publicize the free public library interests of the state. Luella Moss, president of the commission, brought the idea before the state convention of the Missouri Library Association and asked its participation in the plans and production. MLA agreed to cooperate. Through the courtesy of radio station KFRU in Columbia, broadcasts called "The Library Hour" were made weekly in 1936. The programs had a wide range of speakers -- librarians, teachers, clergymen, publicists, writers, and professional book reviewers. The successful series of programs attracted state and national interest; the Adult Education Department of the American Library Association asked for copies of some of the scripts.¹³⁶ Moss, chairman of the Broadcasting Committee of MLA, was responsible for the series.¹³⁷

The program of weekly broadcasts was greatly expanded in 1937. The commission and MLA cooperated to produce the programs which were heard over six radio stations in the state: KWOS, Jefferson City; KFRU, Columbia; KFEQ, St. Joseph; KMBC, Kansas City; KGBX, Springfield; and KMOX, St. Louis.¹³⁸

In 1936, 8,237 requests were answered, an increase of 2,472 over 1935. There were 50,175 books mailed out, an increase of 9,361. Although 846 books were added to the collection, more than 400 had to be discarded, and the collection remained in unsatisfactory condition.¹³⁹ The secretary was able to make brief visits to Union, Neosho, Doniphan, Malden, and Dexter, but it was necessary to do all other extension work by correspondence.¹⁴⁰

The most significant event of 1937 was the employment of an extension librarian. The General Assembly had finally granted an appropriation that was large enough to permit this addition to

the staff. Sarah Molony was hired for this position. She was a graduate of the University of Missouri and also had studied for two full years at New York State University and Columbia University schools of library science. During her first three months of work at the commission, she visited 110 libraries in fifty-two counties. She wanted to make a rapid survey of the state and then return first to the communities that needed her most.¹⁴¹

In 1937 there was also a more sufficient book fund. Unfortunately, a large sum from that fund was spent for new stall stacks, but it was necessary to help combat the termites which had infested the capitol building. Since the termites had first appeared, it had been necessary to discard and burn over twenty-five books and tear out the wooden book stacks. "Some of the books were eaten so thoroughly that there was no record left except the outside cover."¹⁴²

For the second year, the commission participated in a plan fostered by the Children's Section of the American Library Association; the plan was a traveling exhibit of juvenile books. Eighteen outstanding publishers sent their best summer and autumn children's books to state library agencies throughout the country. The commission received 142 titles. These were evaluated and made up into groups that were sent around to the librarians in Missouri who wished to examine the books before purchasing them.¹⁴³

In May 1938, the State-wide Library Project of the Works Progress Administration, sponsored by the commission, was inaugurated. Before this time, however, there had been a number of certified W.P.A. workers doing clerical work and repairing books in public libraries around Missouri; the only objective then was to give people employment. Also, a few public library units, unsupervised by professionals, had been started by W.P.A. When the project began, professionally trained library supervisors were appointed. All existing W.P.A. library units were included in the project and new ones were established. The

professional objectives of the W.P.A. project were to supply needed clerical assistance to established libraries and to demonstrate the commission's plans for the development of library services in Missouri with the goal that permanent library service would result.¹⁴⁴ The project supplied a group of technical supervisors, and Miss Molony devoted most of her time to the project until a state supervisor was appointed in August 1939.¹⁴⁵

The project had three types of units: (1) service units were those where clerical assistance was given to already established libraries; (2) book repair units were those where library material was preserved and repaired; and (3) W.P.A. public library units which were organized or reorganized by district library supervisors and were operated entirely, or largely, by W.P.A. clerks. All three units were under the administrative control of the W.P.A. and the technical director of the commission.¹⁴⁶

Demonstrations of county-wide service were given to help people decide whether or not they wanted to accept library service as a part of their public responsibility. In organizing and operating these demonstrations, emphasis was placed on existing library conditions. The objectives were to create an informed public opinion, an organization of citizens' groups, and demonstration plans which would be practical and serve as basic guides when a permanent county library was established.¹⁴⁷

The first demonstration in Missouri was in Lafayette County. To introduce it, women's organizations, extension clubs, and rural groups were informed about county-wide service by the distribution of mimeographed information. Local library committees were formed in all communities having more than one hundred persons. All the committees met, a library association was formed, and the Lafayette County Library Board was elected.¹⁴⁸

The Lafayette County Court assisted in the demonstration by providing a bookmobile, facilities to house the library, and necessary library supplies. The W.P.A. furnished the books, a professional librarian, and library clerks. Four previously

established public library units in the county became branch libraries because they had their own book collections. In addition, seven deposit stations, where books were left for circulation, were established. The W.P.A. clerks were in charge of the branch libraries and deposit stations. The bookmobile made many stops at rural schools and filling stations.¹⁴⁹

The W.P.A. organized demonstrations in other counties, and the commission credited the interest shown in establishing county libraries to the activities of the W.P.A.

Besides working with the W.P.A. project, the extension librarian visited other libraries giving assistance and encouragement as they tried to solve their problems. In 1938, she visited ninety-one libraries, and in 1940, she traveled ten thousand miles, visiting seventy-three counties.

The weekly radio broadcasts continued to be successful and other stations joined the program: in 1938, KHPE in Cape Girardeau; in 1939, KWOC in Poplar Bluff; and in 1940, WTAD in Hannibal.¹⁵¹

The books, stacks, and office of the commission were moved to the new state office building during the week of December 15, 1938. Although the new quarters were not any larger than the previous ones, the conditions were more pleasant.¹⁵²

During the spring of 1941, a series of library institutes was held for the first time since 1922. The extension librarian planned and directed the six institutes which were concerned primarily with book purchasing and library budgets.¹⁵³

On July 1, 1941, Molony resigned to become the librarian of the public library in Quincy, Illinois. Edith Gantt was appointed to take her place. Gantt had experience in county library work and was a specialist in public libraries for the Office of Education in Washington, D.C.¹⁵⁴

When the United States entered World War II, the nation's libraries were called into service. On January 12, 1942, a national campaign began to secure gifts of books for the armed forces and the Merchant Marine. The campaign, under the guidance

of the American Library Association, the American Red Cross, and the USO, sought ten million books to supplement the government's existing library facilities for soldiers. Books on technical information, current affairs, and good fiction were especially desired; unbound magazines and newspapers were not wanted. Ruth O'Malley, secretary of the commission, was the Missouri director. Librarians in Missouri were asked to publicize the campaign, collect and sort the books.¹⁵⁵

As Missouri director, O'Malley appointed an executive committee of eight persons. This committee met in Jefferson City on December 20, 1941, and decided to divide the state into ten districts corresponding to the State Highway Divisions. Each district had a chairman who was responsible for the organization of the eleven or twelve counties in his district. Dorothea Hyle, Kansas City, as the State Publicity Director.¹⁵⁶

The drive seemed to be progressing slowly (compared to the ones in World War I), but reports indicated that books of good quality were being donated. The books were brought to the district chairmen for sorting and final distribution. Control of this distribution was held in the New York office so that states needing could draw from the resources of other states; some states had no military camps while others had many.¹⁵⁷

During the first year of the campaign, over 188,000 books were collected in Missouri.¹⁵⁸ By January 28, 1942, more than one million books had been collected across the nation. When the War Department began to request books for troops embarking for far away places, the books were available.¹⁵⁹

In April 1942, the citizens of Platte County voted for the establishment and financial support of a county library system. This was a first in Missouri, a milestone in library development, and the commission acknowledged the efforts of the W.P.A. demonstration in that county.¹⁶⁰

The State-wide Library Project under the W.P.A. ended on February 1, 1943. A demonstration of regional library service in Phelps and Pulaski counties had just been organized when the

federal aid was withdrawn. Federally owned books, which were a part of the project, were distributed by the W.P.A. to libraries in different areas of Missouri.¹⁶¹

During 1943, many small libraries passed a tax to continue the service started by the W.P.A. project, but these small libraries usually could not provide financial support for an adequate staff and a good collection. The commission believed that if smaller libraries were parts of larger units the people would receive more and better service for their money.¹⁶²

Edith Gantt, the extension librarian, left the commission February 1, 1943, and a new extension librarian was not employed until September 15, when Edna Bothe joined the staff. During the period the commission was without an extension librarian, O'Malley made many trips, including the first official visit to the first county library in Platte County, Missouri. Bothe made two extended trips, visiting over eighty libraries, including five army camp libraries.¹⁶³

Ruth O'Malley resigned as executive secretary on January 31, 1944, to join the staff of the Cincinnati Public Library. She was the secretary of the commission for eleven years. On March 1, 1944, Kathryn P. Mier was appointed secretary.¹⁶⁴

During 1944, the extension librarian visited over one hundred libraries and talked to many individuals about library development. Intensive work was done to organize county committees for county libraries. The commission gratefully accepted the gift of a film depicting county library service which was donated by J.O. Rankin of Hayti, Missouri.¹⁶⁵

In 1944 the T.J. Moss Tie Company in St. Louis announced that it was donating a bookmobile stocked with a representative collection of new books to the commission.¹⁶⁶ The bookmobile was formally accepted by Governor Phil M. Donnelly from E.E. Pershall, president of the company's board of directors, on January 16, 1946. The bookmobile was used in more than fifty counties to demonstrate how a county system of library service could serve its residents. During the first three months of

1946, the bookmobile traveled over ten thousand miles and had over 300,000 visitors. The Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs; the Missouri Farm Bureau Federation, Home and Community Department; and Beta Sigma Phi (an organization of young business women) pledged three additional bookmobile units for demonstration purposes.¹⁶⁷

In the April school elections of 1945, eight Missouri counties brought the proposition for the establishment of a county library to a vote. The vote was successful in Clark and Jackson counties. In six of these counties, the beginning of the movement for a tax-supported county library came as a result of visits by the commission's secretary and extension librarian. During the campaigns the commission gave encouragement and assistance. The commission advised each county to form a county library committee. (In most of the counties that were not successful, this advice was not taken; Clark and Jackson counties did have such committees.) Commission staff members gave talks at meetings of county and local groups, such as civic and professional clubs, rural extension clubs, and county teachers' meetings. The county school board members were also contacted. At some of these talks the film depicting county library service was shown. Publicity material (posters, pamphlets, mimeographed letters, newspaper articles, and radio announcements) were provided by the commission. During the month before the election, the commission's manager of traveling libraries, Blanche Jones, helped by taking the Platte County Library's bookmobile to two counties demonstrating its use in county library service.¹⁶⁸ Most of the unsuccessful counties decided to bring the propositions to a vote the next year. In the April 1946 elections, nine of the twelve counties that submitted the propositions to establish county libraries were successful. This meant that 632,352 Missourians would be served by county libraries in 1947.¹⁶⁹

In 1945, Governor Donnelly appointed Mrs. George A. Rozier, of Jefferson City, and Mrs. J. Henry Patton, of Lebanon, to the

commission. One of the vacancies was due to the resignation in June 1944 of Luella Moss who was in poor health; the other had existed since 1942. In May 1945 Rozier was elected president.¹⁷⁰ She was the commission's last president.

On November 7, 1935, the Missouri Library Association adopted a state library plan for Missouri. The plan stated that the state should assume responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of adequate educational and library facilities for all its citizens. The plan called for a central library agency with regional branches, deposit stations, and book truck service; it suggested that the Missouri Library Commission could become this agency by being reorganized and enlarged. The plan also declared that the state should supplement local budgets. Luella Moss and Ruth O'Malley were on the committee that formulated the plan.¹⁷¹

Eleven years later, on July 10, 1946, Senate Bill No. 369 was signed by Governor Donnelly, and the Missouri Library Commission became the Missouri State Library.¹⁷² (A copy of Senate Bill No. 369 is given in Appendix H.) The act creating the Missouri Library Commission was repealed, and the Missouri State Library was established as a part of the Missouri Department of Education. All the powers, duties, and functions of the commission were transferred to the state library. In addition, the state library was empowered to create regional branches and to give bookmobile service. The bill also provided for state aid to libraries. The state library was organized to give public library and adult education service, school library service, institutional library service, and public documents service. Finally, the bill provided for a state librarian, necessary personnel, and the State Library Advisory Board. The board was to be composed of the president of the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the librarian of the University of Missouri, and two other persons appointed by the governor. The function of the board was to review the work of the state library.¹⁷³

When the Missouri Library Commission became the Missouri State Library, it was hoped that the goals of the 1935 plan would be realized.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Massachusetts was the first state to have a library commission. When it was organized in 1890, there were over one hundred towns without free public libraries. By 1899, only seven towns in Massachusetts did not have library facilities. Missouri did not even have a library commission until 1907, and it took over six years to persuade the state legislature that one was needed. The Missouri Library Commission, judged by its own objectives, was able to make little significant progress during the thirty-nine years of its existence. Although the commission tried to move forward, Missouri continued to lag behind other states with library commissions. Different factors contributed to this failure to keep pace.

The people instrumental in the formation of the commission stated clearly that the most important objective of a state library commission was to start public libraries in communities which had none. The second most important objective was to foster and assist existing libraries. The commissioners who served throughout the years agreed. The traveling library was intended to pave the way for a permanent self-supporting library. Instead, traveling libraries provided the only library service to many Missouri communities and individuals for years; circulation of the commission's books, especially to individuals, generally increased during the commission's existence. The commission was financially unable to work toward achieving its most important objective. Travel funds were frequently minimal -- even nonexistent, and the salary fund was too small to hire a full-time extension librarian until 1937.

The extension librarian was urgently needed, especially after Missouri finally passed a county library law in 1921. Without a librarian to go to communities and organize campaigns, nothing was accomplished. In 1928, fifty-one per cent of all

Missourians did not have access to a public library, and there were no county libraries in Missouri, although every state bordering her had county libraries. It was not until 1942, twenty-one years after the law passed, that the first county library was organized in Missouri.

At about the time the county library law passed, it looked as though the commission might begin to move forward, but the budget for 1923-24 was cut -- only the beginning of serious financial problems ahead. By 1931, the United States was plunging toward the depths of economic depression. In Missouri, state revenue was much lower than anticipated, and the commission's budget was reduced drastically. The situation became worse, and in 1933 the commission was confronted with a grave crisis. A bill seeking to abolish the commission was introduced into the state legislature. After a tense struggle, the bill failed to pass, but the commission remained on shaky ground. The staff was reduced to two people, circulation was decreasing, and the collection was sliding into unsatisfactory condition. It was about 1936 before the commission began to rally.

Extensive work to organize county libraries was not begun by the commission's extension librarian and executive secretary until 1944. Although the major urban areas of Missouri had well-developed library service, rural Missouri did not. The first bookmobile donated to the commission was formally accepted in 1946, and being ideally suited for library service to rural areas, it was used extensively. Bookmobiles were not new; as early as 1920, Delaware, Indiana, Minnesota, and other states were using automobiles, or book wagons, in extension work.

Another obstacle to the establishment of libraries was Missouri law. Library service had to be established under existing law, and during the commission's existence, Missouri was governed by a state constitution adopted in 1875. That constitution limited the amount a city or county could tax itself for general revenue expenses. In the laws governing the

establishment of library service in either a city or county, a limitation of two miles on the dollar was placed upon the amount that could be voted, and any amount voted had to come out of the general revenue fund. In many cases, it was impossible to add the cost of library service to a city or county budget because every cent was allocated already to specific purposes.

In 1946 Missouri had a new state constitution and the Missouri State Library replaced the Missouri Library Commission. It was the beginning of a new and promising era in library development for Missouri. Although the commission did not accomplish its primary goals, it served the best that it could and made a beginning in many areas that can be traced to the functions of the Missouri State Library today.

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APPENDIXES

- A Text of the proposed MoLC bill
- B Text of the act creating MoLC
- C Members of MoLC, 1907-1946
- D Secretaries of MoLC, 1907-1946
- E Appropriations and Expenditures, 1907-1946
- F Circulation statistics, 1907-1946
- G Copy of House Bill No. 5
- H Senate Bill No. 369

APPENDIX C

Members of the Missouri Library Commission, 1907-1946

1907-1908	Richard Henry Jesse
1907-1912	Purd B. Wright
1907-1912	Adelaide J. Thompson
1907-1915	J.P. Green
1907-1916	Howard A. Gass
1909-1916	A. Ross Hill
1912-1913	Mrs. W.K. James
1912-1915	W.P. Evans
1912-1918	Arthur E. Bostwick
1915-1916	A.P. Settle
1915-1920	T. Berry Smith
1916-1918	Uel W. Lamkin
1918-1921	Curtis E. Chrane
1918-1923	Sam A Baker
1918-1935	Ward Edwards
1920-1925	Mrs. W.K. James
1921-1923	John Carlton Jones
1922-1930	Clarence J. Baxter
1923-1934	Charles A. Lee
1924-1930	Stratton D. Brooks
1926-1932	Mrs. Joseph J. Richesin
1930-1935	Elizabeth Summersby
1930-1935	Walter Williams
1932-1937	Charles C. Schuttler
1933-1944	Mrs. Luella St. Clair Moss
1934-1941	Lloyd W. King
1935-1937	Emily M. Lewis Norcross
1935-1946	Frederick A. Middlebush
1937-1941	Marjorie McCarthy Robins
1937-1943	Rev. Wilbur D. Ruggles
1941-1946	Mrs. Helen C. Zwick
1942-1946	Roy Scantlin
1944-1946	Mrs. George A. Rozier
1944-1946	Mrs. J. Henry Patton

APPENDIX D

Secretaries of the Missouri Library Commission, 1907-1946

1907-1919	Elizabeth B. Wales
1920-1925	Irving R. Bundy
1925-1933	Jane Morey
1933-1944	Ruth O'Malley
1944-1946	Kathryn P. Mier

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SUMMARY

November 1975

Doering, Nancy

A History of the Missouri Library Commission, 1907-1946

In 1907 the Missouri Library Commission was created and given the responsibility for state library service to public libraries, state-supported educational institutions, and state government. During the first ten years of its existence, the commission put most of its efforts on organizing traveling libraries and circulating them to communities without public libraries, schools, study clubs, small public libraries, and individuals. Although its primary objective was establishing public libraries, the commission's appropriation was not sufficient enough to hire a permanent extension librarian. In 1909, the Missouri General Assembly created a legislative reference library, similar to the ones in other states, to be supervised by the commission. An adequate appropriation for the library was never made, however, and the commission could not develop the library to its full potential. Fulfilling another of its obligations, the commission conducted summer library training courses in cooperation with the University of Missouri and the St. Louis Public Library. The first one was held in 1912, and about four more were held during the next eight years. Economic conditions forced the commission to abandon this project.

A county library law was passed in 1921, but without an extension librarian, the commission could not organize effective campaigns for county libraries. Steadily increasing requests for books kept the commission's staff busy at the headquarters. When the severe economic depression engulfed the country several years later, the commission's budget was reduced drastically and services were curtailed sharply. In 1933, some state legislators wanted to abolish the commission completely, but it survived that crisis.

In 1937 the commission was finally able to hire an extension librarian. The first county library in Missouri was organized in 1942, but it was not until 1944 that extensive efforts were made by the extension librarian to establish public libraries.

Since 1935, librarians of Missouri had had a plan for greater state library service. In 1946, when the Missouri Library Commission was replaced by the Missouri State Library, the first steps were taken toward achieving that plan. A new era in state library service was beginning, but it was the commission that had made the difficult beginning, despite the many obstacles it encountered.

The Moves of the Missouri State Library

In 1907 the Missouri legislator created the Missouri Library Commission. Prior to this there was what was called the State Library, but in fact it is what we now call the Missouri Supreme Court Library. The new State Library was first housed in the Capital Annex, what had previously been called the Supreme Court building located on the Southeast corner of the Capitol grounds (what is now the corner of East Capital and Jefferson St.).

When the Capitol burned in 1911, the State Library was pushed out of it's quarters, and moved to the basement of the Jefferson City Public Library. Due to lack of space this was a very temporary move, and shortly the library moved to the Hess building on the corner of High St. and Washington St. In 1913 the capitol was finished enough that the library could return to the Capitol Annex. However, one month later the library was moved to a house owned by the state at 202 Washington St.

In 1917 the state library was moved into the Capitol on the ground floor. In 1929 the stacks stayed on the ground floor, but all the offices moved to the fourth floor.

In 1938 the library finally seem to have found a home. It moved into the new state office building, now called the Broadway building. The library stayed in this building for 29 years, until 1967. At that time the library was moved into the Dawson Building at 304 East High St. It was to remain there for 18 years until 1984 when it was moved into the Truman Building.

The Wolfner Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped was administratively assigned to the State Library in 1977, but didn't physically move from St. Louis until 1985.

In 1987 the expanded State Library was moved into a leased building at 2002 Missouri Blvd. This was intended to be a temporary move until a new building, the State Information Center, containing the State Library, State Archives, State Records, and the Secretary of States Office, was finished.

Now in 1991 the State Information Center is being completed, and while the space assigned to the state library is smaller in volume, the roof shouldn't leak, the dock area shouldn't be flooded during each rainstorm, and the air conditioning vents should work. The State Library is scheduled to move once again in the spring of 1991.

Over the past eight two years the state library has moved twelve times, thirteen if you count Wolfners move. That averages out to a move approximately ever seven years. We will wait to see how long the State Library will be in the State Information Center.

APPENDIX E

BIENNIIUM	APPROPRIATIONS	EXPENDITURES ¹				
		BOOKS ²	REPLACEMENTS	SALARIES	TRAVEL & CONTINGENT	OPERATIONS
1907-08	\$10,000.00	\$4,491.96	0.00	\$2,814.96	\$457.43	0.00
1909-10	12,000.00	4,598.31	0.00	5,599.64	856.18	0.00
1911-12	12,000.00	4,077.00	0.00	6,460.25	1,900.00	0.00
1913-14	14,200.00	3,999.17	0.00	6,597.70	3,599.92	0.00
1915-16	15,430.00	3,815.36	0.00	6,520.85	3,827.67	0.00
1917-18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1919-20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1921-22	???	7,989.46	0.00	13,210.25	5,534.42	0.00
1923-24	???	8,200.50	0.00	12,013.00	3,955.61	0.00
1925-26	24,500.00	5,999.62	0.00	11,939.28	4,000.00	0.00
1927-28	28,100.00	5,499.77	0.00	12,150.00	3,999.92	0.00
1929-30	29,750.00	8,498.32	0.00	15,845.05	5,399.73	0.00
1931-32	32,100.00	3,255.87	\$191.77	17,508.80	0.00	\$3,148.77
1933-34	10,862.50	396.91	0.00	8,991.50	0.00	1,456.33
1935-36	15,594.00	1,999.77	199.68	11,843.85	0.00	1,549.15
1937-38	28,570.10	4,985.17	1,383.92	17,733.50	0.00	3,304.73
1939-40	29,785.00	5,496.52	1,360.91	19,468.90	0.00	3,412.83
1941-42	34,300.00	7,938.43	1,374.26	20,223.05	0.00	4,293.88
1943-44	34,399.00	7,998.65	1,400.00	20,499.44	0.00	4,400.00
1945-46 ⁵	40,950.00	9,997.86	1,343.25	21,996.67	0.00	7,599.92
Totals:	248,090.60	94,746.69	7,253.79	228,601.73	33,073.45	29,165.61

¹ \$2,500 withheld by governor

² \$6,600 withheld by governor

³ \$2,500 withheld by governor

⁴ \$7,992.16 withheld by governor

⁵ Eighteen month period January 1945 - June 30, 1946.

APPENDIX F
CIRCULATION STATISTICS - VOLUMES LENT - 1907-1946.

Year	Communities	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Individuals	Study Clubs	Other	Clear Type Books	Capitol
1908 ²	2,550	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
1909	2,257	349	3,492	0	1,490	1,113	-	-
1910	3,438	239	3,292	29	1,745	1,244	-	-
1911	3,761	540	3,907	51	1,168	774	-	-
1912	3,571	356	5,098	11	1,759	729	-	-
1913	2,432	1,259	6,918	112	1,216	1,454	-	-
1914	2,019	771	9,331	79	953	2,222	-	-
1915	1,346	317	7,751	259	2,611	1,044	-	-
1916	1,884	775	8,391	240	3,419	1,210	-	-
1917	4,978	847	5,916	169	1,659	1,988	-	-
1918	2,500	350	2,850	156	1,050	1,750	-	-
1919 ⁶								
1920	6,495	667	5,753	329	48	1,373	-	-
1921	6,491	285	7,613	963	556	515	-	-
1922	6,980	762	7,640	1,596	1,097	1,387	-	-
1923	6,969	564	9,811	3,225	726	543	-	-
1924	9,035	529	9,988	5,110	731	390	-	-
1925	10,343	260	10,808	6,196	907	-	-	-
1926	13,320	1,871	10,964	7,663	1,335	-	-	-
1927	17,678	3,133	10,193	8,608	1,815	-	-	-
1928	21,892	2,917	9,327	9,158	2,031	-	-	-
1929	17,268	2,509	9,421	10,750	3,227	-	-	-
1930	21,265	4,671	9,390	16,083	4,082	-	-	-
1931	19,451	33,235	12,183	17,217	4,398	-	-	-
1932	17,982	2,253	13,490	19,318	7,258	-	-	-
1933	15,214	2,153	16,461	11,231	6,700	-	30	-
1934	5,017	1,119	11,765	9,880	3,468	-	67	-
1935	10,544	1,712	15,058	9,558	3,837	-	103	-
1936	13,219	3,051	14,865	13,312	4,437	-	115	1,174

⁶No report

Year	Communities	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Individuals	Study Clubs	Other	Clear Type Books	Capitol
1908 ⁷	2,550	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
1937	15,452	2,965	13,823	14,794	5,640	-	95	1,516
1938	12,571	1,824	14,351	14,240	8,012	-	59	1,343
1939	14,385	2,418	14,147	14,713	8,411	-	56	885
1940	14,279	2,420	13,765	16,780	7,317	-	46	880
1941	15,716	2,523	9,853	20,211	6,182	-	48	476
1942	10,200	2,587	9,101	14,487	6,019	-	64	404
1943	4,341	4,273	10,432	13,809	4,585	-	53	707
1944	4,605	5,762	18,743	15,565	3,126	-	36	828
1945 ⁷	11,349	7,863	42,990	25,887	4,818	-	346	1414

⁷Period covers January 1, 1945 tho June 30, 1946.

**APPENDIX G
REFERENCE SERVICES**

Year	Communities	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Individuals	Study Clubs	Other	Clear Type Books ⁴	Capitol ⁵
1908 ⁸	51	0	41	0	7	8	-	-
1909	42	7	69	0	31	22	-	-
1910	73	3	90	4	38	26	-	-
1911	75	17	82	6	34	18	-	-
1912	69	14	136	5	35	15	-	-
1913	52	24	144	30	49	27	-	-
1914	39	18	266	37	31	52	-	-
1915	33	18	235	40	51	24	-	-
1916	43	34	280	30	117	29	-	-
1917	109	38	145	27	77	72	-	-
1918	50	7	57	14	21	25	-	-
1919 ⁹								
1920	137	55	218	80	23	33	-	-
1921	135	43	272	350	67	12	-	-
1922	135	113	316	535	166	29	-	-
1923	151	115	380	1,278	149	10	-	-
1924 ¹⁰								
1925	180	76	355	1,949	260	-	-	-
1926	229	193	314	2,822	392	-	-	-
1927	315	394	314	2,951	470	-	-	-
1928	395	342	362	3,292	517	-	-	-
1929	337	301	335	3,960	814	-	-	-
1930	396	386	280	5,143	1,0218	-	-	-
1931	359	411	710	5,564	1,095	-	-	-
1932	344	387	792	6,555	2,081	-	-	-
1933	345	336	946	3,951	1,349	-	20	-

⁸Incomplete report

⁹No report

¹⁰No report

Year	Communities	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Individuals	Study Clubs	Other	Clear Type Books ¹	Capitol ²
1934	142	238	989	2,176	744	-	41	-
1935	306	380	1,351	2,756	919	-	43	-
1936	419	497	1,562	4,172	872	-	43	672
1937	422	484	1,405	4,554	1,017	-	38	925
1938	251	464	1,373	4,572	1,631	-	27	896
1939	310	578	1,344	5,070	1,659	-	29	627
1940	285	741	983	6,129	1,503	-	20	736
1941	266	736	532	6,576	1,093	-	18	371
1942	181	791	722	5,070	766	-	13	340
1943	100	632	731	4,910	789	-	8	514
1944	118	982	1,212	5,638	601	-	8	480
1945 ¹¹	184	1,355	2,274	9,713	979	-	32	893

¹¹period covers January 1, 1945 tho June 30, 1946.

