

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

EXHIBITING

THE PROGRESS OF THE LIBRARY

DURING

THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 1, 1874.



WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
1874.

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,  
*Washington, D. C., December 7, 1874.*

The increase of the Library of Congress during the past year has been highly gratifying. By the regular annual enumeration of books in the Library on the 1st of December, 1874, it is found that the aggregate number of volumes now amounts to 274,157, to which must be added about 53,000 pamphlets. Out of this aggregate, the law department of the Library embraces 33,712 volumes. At the corresponding date one year since the Library contained 258,752 volumes, thus exhibiting an increase during the year of 15,405 volumes.

The additions to the Library during the year were derived from the following-named sources:

	Books.	Pamphlets.
By purchase .....	6,528	565
By copyright.....	6,840	3,218
By deposit of the Smithsonian Institution .....	1,264	1,756
By donation, (including State documents).....	668	75
By exchange .....	105	658
Total .....	15,405	6,272

The number and designation of articles received at the Library, under the laws which make it the depository of all copyright matter, will be found below:

Books .....	6,840
Periodicals .....	6,432
Musical compositions .....	7,726
Dramatic compositions .....	140
Photographs .....	1,358
Engravings and chromos .....	922
Maps, charts, and drawings.....	658
Prints .....	5,598
Total number of articles.....	29,674

The deposits under the copyright law thus exceed those of the year 1873 to the number of 5,736 articles. As the law requires that two copies of each publication protected by copyright shall be deposited, the actual number of separate publications received, excluding dupli-

cates, was 14,841, of which there were 3,424 volumes of books and 3,218 periodicals.

The total number of copyright entries in the office of the Librarian of Congress during the year ending December 1, 1874, was 16,283, being an increase over the entries of the preceding year of 931. The amount paid into the Treasury by the Librarian on account of copyright fees was \$13,524.78.

This steady increase of the copyright business, and the securing of a substantially complete representation of all publications upon which copyright is claimed, through the requirement of one central office of registry at the seat of Government, indicates the wisdom of the step taken by Congress four years ago in transferring the whole business of copyrights to Washington. By this means alone could be secured for permanent preservation in the national archives a substantially complete record of the progress of American literature and science, not only in the higher fields of creative intellect, but in the direction of educational, musical, and artistic publications.

By an act of the last session, approved June 18, 1874, the entry of all prints and labels intended for use in connection with any article of manufacture was transferred from the office of the Librarian to that of the Commissioner of Patents. This relieves the copyright records of several thousand entries annually of mere labels, which never had any appropriate relation to copyright protection, and which were useless as additions to the collections of the Library. This act, notwithstanding that it took effect on the 1st day of August last, since which time all labels claiming protection have been registered in the Patent-Office, has still left the copyright business of the year considerably larger than that of the year preceding.

The unexpended balances of funds under charge of the Joint Committee on the Library were as follows December 1, 1874 :

Fund for increase of Library.....	\$14,449 75
Fund for contingent expenses of Library.....	2,633 86
Fund for expense of exchanging public documents ..	1,250 00
Fund for purchase and printing of unpublished historical documents relating to the early French discoveries in the Northwest and on the Mississippi.....	10,000 00
Fund for ornamenting the Capitol with works of art.....	7,079 15
Fund for completion of three volumes of Wilkes's exploring expedition.....	5,332 91
Fund for salaries in Botanic Garden and greenhouses.....	7,193 08
Fund for improving Botanic Garden .....	3,801 92
Fund to procure plans for accommodation of the Library..	2,000 00
Fund for portraits of Presidents of the United States .....	850 00

The catalogue system of the Library is of cardinal importance, and the question of the most expedient means of furnishing a ready index to its full contents, available to all who consult it, and kept constantly up to

date, is not free from difficulty. Many libraries of the first class, both in Europe and in this country, have abandoned the printing of catalogues of their collections, from the constantly increasing difficulty, in the rapid growth of each year, of keeping them up to date without too heavy an expenditure. In this Library this want has hitherto been partially met by the issue of an annual catalogue of additions, giving titles with approximate fullness of detail. But these catalogues have omitted the pamphlets, and to a large extent the minor publications, such as school-books and religious books of an elementary character. To have included these would have swollen these annual catalogues to at least double their current size, and their cost to the Government would have been great. It will thus be seen that the printed catalogues of the Library have never fully represented its collections. It is believed that the wants of Congress and of the public using the Library would be better subserved by substituting for the annual catalogues the issue of a new general catalogue of the Library, absolutely complete as to titles of books and pamphlets in the collection, while abridging the titles to much greater succinctness than has heretofore been observed in the annual catalogues. By this means the full contents of the Library up to the date of publication will appear in print under the names of authors. The materials for this exhaustive catalogue are already fully prepared in manuscript, and are found in the card-title drawers of the Library, where they are at all times available. The labor of abridging these titles (some 250,000 in number) for the press has been commenced, and it is hoped to have the material ready for the printer in a very few months.

The undersigned prepared during the last session of Congress a scheme for a complete index to the documents and debates of Congress. The urgent necessity of such a work to our public men, whether in legislative, executive, or judicial stations, need not be enforced by any argument. The plan for this comprehensive index to the materials of our political history was briefly summed up in a memorandum dated June 10, 1874, and printed as Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 125 of the Forty-third Congress, first session. It is proposed to embrace in the index the Congressional documents from 1789 to 1873, inclusive; the Annals of Congress, the Register of Debates, and the Congressional Globe, covering the same period; the American State Papers, first and second series; the Statutes at Large of the United States; the Journals or statutes of the Continental Congress; Force's American Archives, covering a portion of the revolutionary period; the diplomatic correspondence from 1774 to 1789; the reports of debates in the Federal Convention and in the several State conventions which were held pending the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The total number of volumes required to be indexed is between sixteen and seventeen hundred.

At the request of the undersigned, the Joint Committee on the Library recommended, and Congress provided for the addition of two assistants to the force employed in the Library, with a view to the com-

mencement of this great work. The late period of the year at which this action was taken has rendered it impossible to do more than to fully mark out the ground and to prepare a complete list of what is necessary to constitute a full set of the congressional documents. This has occupied much time, expended in reducing to systematic order the contents of the bewildering series of documents existing in the various Government depositories throughout the city. Of the early documents, up to the Fourteenth Congress, or from 1789 to 1815, inclusive, no two sets are alike, nor is there in any one place in Washington a perfect file of documents printed by order of Congress. The labor undertaken by the undersigned has been courteously aided by the heads of all the various Departments of the Government, who have placed their sets of public documents before my assistants in their task of securing a complete record of all existing documents. Owing to the fact that no uniform method of binding or of indexing the early documents prevailed, and to the consequent scattered nature of their contents, both in folio and octavo, this has been a work of unexpected intricacy. Upon the completion of researches now in progress at the Treasury Department, the undersigned will be prepared to report to the committee what materials are needed in order to form a complete file of public documents for the index. He is happy to be able to add that the set of later documents in the Library of Congress, from 1815 to 1874, is more nearly complete than was anticipated, embracing two copies of all documents for the past sixty years, except about 150 volumes.

The question of most commanding importance regarding the Library still remains unsettled, and that is the provision of more space for its overflowing collections and business. No substantial progress has been made toward supplying this imminent necessity during the last two years, owing chiefly to a want of harmony of views in Congress as to the most expedient means of building additional accommodation. Although the Joint Committee on the Library were substantially united as to the necessity of a separate building, their recommendation of an appropriation to commence the work, on ground to be selected by the committee, failed to pass Congress at the last session. A small appropriation of \$2,000 was made to enable the Library Committee to procure plans for the accommodation of the Library. Under this authority, several designs for an enlargement of the Capitol have been prepared. Until the committee shall have considered these several plans, it would be premature to allude to them in detail. But the undersigned deems it his duty to renew here the suggestion made in his former annual reports, to the effect that no enlargement of the Capitol likely to be agreed upon can possibly furnish either permanent or appropriate accommodation for so great a library as this is becoming. The collection of books has already been twice doubled in numerical extent within the past thirteen years. The present rate of increase, from the ordinary accessions by copyright, by documentary exchanges, by the contribu-

tions of the Smithsonian Institution, and by the very moderate purchases now made, will swell the Library to five hundred thousand volumes in less than twenty years, to more than one million volumes in fifty years, and to two million volumes before a century passes; this, too, without any increase of the present extremely modest appropriation of \$11,500 for the annual purchase of books.

When it is considered that in the single year just elapsed 30,000 articles (including duplicates) on which copyright was granted have been received at the Library; when to this is added the fact that over fifty thousand volumes are already piled upon the floors, without space for shelving or arrangement, and when we reflect that the growth of a country's literature is from the nature of the case illimitable, the impossibility of so enlarging the Capitol as long to afford quarters for so vast and multifarious a collection becomes apparent. The accumulation of maps, engravings, chromos, and photographs alone, which there is now no possibility of exhibiting, will soon require a space as large as the present Library, unless they are to be buried permanently from public view. In no country in Europe, of the first rank, is it attempted to keep the library of the government under the same roof with the halls of legislation. In London, in Paris, in Berlin, in Vienna, in Munich, in St. Petersburg, there exists a national library having its own separate building, while the library of the legislative body, sufficiently copious and ample for its wants, is provided for within the parliamentary walls. Foreign precedents or usages, it is true, form no rule for our guidance or imitation. But when Congress enacted that all entries of copyright throughout the United States should be made in the office of the Library of Congress, and when it added that two copies of every book or other publication protected by copyright should be deposited therein, it took a step which rendered the separation of this vast collection from the Capitol, sooner or later, a necessity. That this building should be, and will be, enlarged, is most true; but when extended so as to give at once additional space and architectural harmony to the edifice, it will still be sufficiently small for the wants of the legislative body. There is urgent need of many more committee-rooms, and of larger ones, as well as of additional space for the courts of the United States. The House of Representatives has recently received an accession of fifty members. With the advancing growth of the Republic, the throng about the Capitol will steadily increase. It is inevitable that the legislature should have more room, and should have it in a shape that can be made most convenient for its uses. No possible enlargement for library purposes would be in such a form that it could be utilized for the wants of Congress, when abandoned by the Library. The dilemma plainly before us will be that the legislature will crowd out the Library, with the alternative that the Library will crowd out the legislative body. Which of these migrations shall first take place is a matter which addresses itself to the sound discretion of Congress.

These considerations are wholly independent of the fact of any obligation on the part of Congress to render this great and priceless repository of knowledge in the widest degree useful to the country. As the only library which contains even an approximate collection of the entire product of the American mind, as found in books, gathered, too, in great part, without cost to the Government, it may well be considered whether it is not due to the people that its stores should be made as accessible as is consistent with its safety and preservation. This result could only be accomplished by a regulation for opening the Library during the evening. There are in the employ of the Government at Washington several thousand clerks and officials, none of whom can draw books from it or have access to it during hours not devoted to their daily duties. It would be neither safe nor expedient to make of this national collection a circulating library; but it might prove of incalculable benefit to the public intelligence, and even tend to the improvement of the Government service, were these rich stores of information thrown freely open every night for the use and reference of all. Such an extension of the benefits of the Library could hardly be made available within the Capitol. Aside from the difficulty of providing a great reading-room within those walls, Capitol Hill is too remote from the center of population to justify the belief that it would be very largely resorted to, even were it open evenings in that locality. Yet that we should continue to see this great Library, as a means of education and enlightenment, so confined and limited in its uses, cannot fail to be viewed with regret by every liberal mind. It is true that there is almost no work, within the vast range of literature and science, which may not at some time prove useful to the legislature of a great nation in their manifold and responsible duties; and, therefore, it is not strictly true that this Library has grown altogether beyond the wants of Congress. But it is true that, in a Republic which rests upon the popular intelligence, and one of whose chiefest glories is its literature, a great national collection of books, while formed primarily for the uses of the legislative and judicial branches of the Government, ought to be utilized by a far wider circle of readers.

Nothing has been said of the relative expense of making extensive architectural additions to the Capitol, as compared with the erection of a new Library building. In the judgment of the best architects, however, the one would cost very nearly the same as the other; and this adds force to the suggestion that the plan which would from the start best adapt means to ends, and provide for the Library in some place where it would have room to grow, would be the wisest and most economical expenditure of the public money. To believe that Congress, which has so liberally provided marble palaces for the current business of post-offices and custom-houses in so many cities of the country, will neglect to provide with proper foresight for this great repository of a nation's learning

and art, would be to charge upon it a degree of illiberality not justified by the history of that body.

While entertaining decided views upon the whole question, the fruit of much thought and experience, the undersigned would not be understood as objecting to any plan for relief which may unite the judgment of the Library Committee and of Congress. The first necessity is that prompt and immediate action be taken toward remedying what has become intolerable, since the Library cannot be administered successfully in its present quarters much longer. It would unquestionably be the easiest for the Librarian and his assistants, and would materially lighten their labors, were an extension of the western front of the Library to be determined on, thus making room for the present overflow of books in close juxtaposition to the existing collection. But such extension, to be of any practical use, would have to be a large one. Anything less than a projection of 100 feet would be a mere makeshift, providing space for a time, but with the necessity of vacating it for new quarters in a very few years. It is therefore that the undersigned has deemed it his duty to place before the committee, perhaps at too great length, the considerations which impel him to the conclusion that a separate building for the Library of Congress, constructed throughout with special reference to its present necessities and future growth in its manifold departments, is demanded alike by a wise regard to economy and public policy.

A. R. SPOFFORD,  
*Librarian of Congress.*

Hon. TIMOTHY O. HOWE,  
*Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library.*