

■ *Frank Evina*

Thanks to the tireless lobbying efforts of sixth Librarian of Congress Ainsworth Rand Spofford, the U. S. copyright registration and deposit system was centralized in the Library of Congress in 1870. In a letter to Representative Thomas A. Jenckes of Rhode Island, who served as chairman of the Committee on Patents and Copyrights, Spofford gave a convincing argument on why the Library of Congress should become the central agency for copyright registration and for custody of the copyright deposits as well.

His dream was finally realized when, on July 8, 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the law centralizing all copyright functions in the Library. Since then, more than 30,000,000 registrations have been recorded.

Copyright Lore

Prior to 1870, copyright registration was administered by the Clerks of the U. S. District Courts. Upon enactment of the 1870 law, all original records of copyright maintained in 41 states and territories (estimated to cover approximately 150,000 registrations) were turned over to the Library of Congress for safekeeping. These historic volumes are now preserved in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division along with many accompanying title page deposits. Entries for great literary classics such as *The Raven*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* may be found in these records. A microfilm copy of the District Court records is available in the Copyright Card Catalog (LM-459) for public inspection. ©