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Drake Library Review: A History of Drake Library

Charlie Cowling

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BEGINNINGS OF LIBRARY SERVICE AT BROCKPORT
First in a series on library history

One hundred fifty years ago this coming December 1 a group of Brockport citizens opened a school in the "noble edifice" they had purchased, a structure originally built in 1836 as a Baptist college which subsequently failed. The school they opened was called the Brockport Collegiate Institute (BCI), first in a direct line leading to our present State University College at Brockport.

The differences between that institution and the present school are as great as the years that separate them. Typical of the academies that flourished in that era before public secondary schooling, the BCI was a transitional form, incorporating elements of teacher training, college preparation and high school education. A student, often as young as fourteen, could take the classical program either as an end in itself or as a college preparatory course, or study to become a school teacher.

In such an atmosphere, with small faculties and limited funds, the library inevitably was small, underfunded, understaffed and little used. The library was a backup for the professors' personal libraries, a necessary adornment to the school and, only to a small extent, a student resource. Often, as was the case here, the role of librarian was a part-time duty taken in addition to other responsibilities. Collections were generally small, a few hundred to a few thousand volumes. In addition to books and a few periodical subscriptions the library frequently would house the "philosophical apparatus" or laboratory equipment.

The first person on record with responsibility for the library was Julius Bate in 1842, whose primary role was that of principal of the school. This was apparently the tradition throughout the BCI era, to have the principal supervise the library.

No specific information survives to relate the library system of arrangement, but typical of that time would have been to place books on shelves labeled by broad subjects, and then number the books by their position on the shelf. The only document we have is an 1853 accession book which lists some 600 monographs. Also listed in this book was the apparatus mentioned above, such as an air pump and a sulphate of copper battery. Periodicals subscribed to numbered between forty and fifty titles. Some we still receive today, such as the New York Times, Atlantic Monthly and Scientific American.

Funding was limited and sporadic in nature. Some funding came from the state, which had a literature fund set up to aid schools that, at least in part, engaged in teacher training. For example, in 1842 application was made to this fund for the amount of $250, which was received. These funds were not frequently awarded, and otherwise the library depended on donations.

Hours were quite limited by our standards. They were: Wednesday, 3-5 P.M. and Saturday, 8-10 A.M. Books circulated for two weeks. A "contribution of $2, in books or money, or 25 cents a term" entitled local residents to use the library. There was no charge for students, a common practice of the day. Overdue fines were 6 cents a day; for "every spot of grease, ink . . . 3-10 cents;" and for "cutting, tearing . . . the cover . . . not less than 10 cents or more than the value of the book at the discretion of the librarian."

Small, understaffed and undersupported as it may appear to us, the BCI library worked for an institution whose main vehicles of information transmission were the text, the lecture, and social encounters with the faculty. The point was to create well-rounded ladies and gentlemen, generalists, not technically expert graduates fitted for particular roles. The library was at the modest end of a spectrum that ran all the way to Harvard and Yale, both similar in organization if somewhat larger. As time went on, the BCI became a state normal school; the great university movement of the 1870's took place; and something closer to today's extensive and sophisticated institution came into being.

Charles Cowling
LIBRARY SERVICES AT THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL
- second in a series on Brockport Library history

In April 1867 the newly formed Brockport State Normal School opened to its first term. The immediate successor to the Brockport Collegiate Institute (1842-1867), the school was the happy result of the Institute’s success in the competition to be one of the new state Normal schools. Secure now with state support, it continued its academy tradition of classical education alongside its new mission as a state teacher training institute.

The library consisted of three collections. There was the “Textbook Library” of 6500 volumes, from which students were issued the texts for their courses. The “Philosophical Apparatus”, or laboratory equipment, was of a size considered adequate for the school. At 650 volumes the smallest, and least used, was the “Miscellaneous and Reference Library”, occupying a role, but not status, equivalent to our current library. With minor changes these figures, and positions, held until near the turn of the century.

During those years, as in the Institute era, the main vehicles of information transmission were the classroom and the textbook. Research at even the faculty level was only just becoming expected in the colleges of the day. As that trend grew and filtered down, interest in and support for libraries became correspondingly greater.

Until that interest became sufficient for change, the library was simply a set of bookstacks “in the corridor, just south of the statue of Demosthenes” according to the semicentennial history of 1917. There was a perception for some years that a better library was needed, but there were no available funds. The school received a general appropriation from the state and out of that had to pay salaries for the fifteen or so staff and maintain the physical plant for a typical enrollment of 500, leaving little left over for the library. A reaction to the weak library was that the student “literary societies”, Arethusa for the women and Gamma Sigma for the men, maintained their own private libraries of several hundred volumes each.

As in the Institute days the position of Librarian was an additional task taken on by a faculty member. First mentioned are Charles McLean and Francis Palmer. Next listed is William Lennon, who in 1875 wrote the first report on the library we have. He noted the worn condition of the textbooks, the generally adequate nature of the apparatus, and the small size of the miscellaneous collection, an inheritance from the Institute.

Herman Burlingame had charge of the library after Lennon, holding the post for many years until his death in 1891. In the 1880s under his tenure a partition was knocked down and the adjoining room made available for shelving and as a reading room. At that time too some additions were made to the miscellaneous collection, the first in twenty years.

In 1894 Janette Reynolds ’73, who had been secretary for the school, became “Assistant Librarian” and then by 1900 “Librarian and Teacher of Library Science”. This came as the Local Board was noting in its annual report to Albany that “The Board also feels like urging upon the Department the necessity for a librarian in the school. Our future teachers need to know how to use books and how to carry on a line of research in a library”. She saw the accomplishment in 1899 of the cataloging of the library under the Dewey Decimal System, the location here of a Federal Government Select Depository and the general beginnings of a modern library.

In the last twenty-five years of the 19th century the groundwork was laid for future growth. By 1900 the library had its own room, a cataloged collection, and a professional librarian to manage it. Next in this series we will see how the structure that was laid upon the pioneering groundwork of Burlingame and Reynolds developed.

Charles Cowling

GOOD-BYE INFOTRAC, HELLO EBSCO

Because of the continuing cycle of budget cuts we have cancelled one of our most popular subscriptions: the computer assisted Academic Index on CD-ROM. All is not lost, as we will begin a subscription to Academic Abstracts on CD-ROM by EBSCO, Inc. The EBSCO database will provide access to a substantial number of journals, covering the same subjects as the Academic Index by InfoTrac.

Peter Olevnik
Later in this series we saw the library at Brockport grow from a typical academy library of the 19th century, a little relied upon adjunct to the lecture and the text, into an organized collection that in 1900 stood on the threshold of the central position the library holds in the college today.

As the university movement of the later 19th century got under way at such institutions as Johns Hopkins, its Germanic-derived influence spread through all levels of academia. Although one keynote of the trend, research by graduate students and the boom in higher degrees such as the Ph.D., did not affect Brockport directly (normal schools were not degree granting institutions, but gave a teaching certificate instead), other elements were present here at the "Old Normal!"

In the May 1, 1929 issue of the *Stylus* an article on library skills noted the need for such ability. "In history class they [freshmen] are told they must read fifty pages from some other [than the assigned] text for the next lesson." This sort of assignment would have been unknown a generation before. From 1918-1930 their instruction was a one credit course in "Library Methods" wherein "a study is made of the up-to-date school library, of library tools such as the Card Catalog..." After 1930 the course does not appear in the catalog, apparently due to declining resources in the Depression era.

Held in these rooms was a collection whose total bound volume count rose from 5,761 in 1901 to 16,712 in 1941. In 1901 the library subscribed to 67 periodicals and 4 newspapers, and by 1941 to 108 periodicals and 6 newspapers. The subject breakdown of the collection reflected the practical and pedagogical concern of the curriculum, with the great bulk of the material falling into four of the Dewey Decimal classes by which the collection was cataloged: Sociology & Education, Literature, History & Geography, and Sciences. The library no longer held the "philosophical apparatus" of earlier years, but did begin to acquire non-book materials in the post-WWI era. The 1941 library annual report listed a collection of 8,746 educational slides and a small collection of phonograph records. A special service, first mentioned in the 1938 report, was that "Through a system of inter-library loan, it is also possible to draw on the resources of the New York State Library."

The library hours in this era typically were M-F, 8:15-12:00, 1:15-5:00 and Sat., 9:00-12:00. In 1936 the library, staffed by student assistants, opened for evening hours, M-Th, 7:00-9:00. There was a card file for circulation and a 2 book limit for students, none for teachers. The circulation period was 2 weeks, with a 2-week renewal possible. The library had a reserve collection from which items could be taken overnight.

From the late 1890’s until 1924, the librarian was Janette Reynolds, affectionately known as 'Jenny Wren'. She had graduated from the school in 1873 and apparently trained on the job with Professor Burlingame who had responsibility for the library prior to her tenure. After her came Elizabeth Sherley who was the first Brockport librarian to have received professional training at the New York State Library School in Albany. Miss Sherley left in 1938 and was succeeded by Mary Lee McCrory who had trained at the University of Buffalo library school. Staffing the library was a one-person job until 1941, when a second librarian, Rosemond Cook, was added.

During this period, there was a children's library located in the wing that housed the campus school, a complete school for area children, which provided experience for student teachers and research opportunities for the staff. It held about 1,000 books and was a responsibility of one or another of the teacher-critics who supervised the school.

In 1941 the library stood on the brink of the enormous changes to come with the war years and their aftermath. The building of Hartwell Hall, the granting of Teacher College status, and the growth years after WWII, when the first separate library building was raised, will be covered next.

Charles Cowling
BROCKPORT STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE LIBRARY

In the Fall of 1939 the main section of the "new" building which we know today as Hartwell Hall was completed. The library occupied the central portion of the second floor. (See accompanying photograph) Compared to the quarters held by the library in the "old" building the new ones were larger, but not by very much. The new library rooms seated 130 as opposed to 110 in the old rooms, and the floor space was correspondingly greater. For a student body of 325 and faculty of 25 the new setting was perfectly adequate yet did lack any significant capacity for growth. It was realized by some at the time that both the site and the building were limited, and Principal Hartwell had hoped to expand the school to new grounds on the western edge of the village. This did in fact occur a generation later, but in 1939 it was not to be. There was at least a new building, a splendid Georgian hall, and one that all took pride in.

Principal Hartwell did achieve a major victory when in 1942 the campaign to grant Teachers College status to the state Normal Schools won approval from the legislature. As a (B.A.) degree granting institution the school had quite a bit of upgrading to do and the library was part of this. More money was spent than ever on books, new librarians and clerks were hired, and the new rooms rapidly became crowded beyond capacity, even with the acquisition of an additional classroom which added 500 more square feet.

The second floor site in present Hartwell Hall was the home of the main library. There was also a Children's Library, holding some 8500 children's books and a large picture collection, an Educational Materials Laboratory which held an up to date collection of textbooks and educational tests, both housed in the Campus Demonstration School wing of the building. In addition, there was a small collection in the Industrial Arts workshop, the only such classroom collection. The main collection had some lengthy back files of a few periodicals, and some older book material, as was to be expected in a school dating back to 1842. The bulk of the collection though reflected the two majors offered by the school, one in general elementary education, and the other in physical education and recreation.

A schedule of hours from the 1950's was M-Th 7:50 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Friday 7:50 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Books circulated for two weeks, and a 2 cent a day fine was levied for overdue items. Interlibrary loan was an active service which borrowed items for patrons from other libraries through the state library. Continuing a tradition of library instruction dating back to the WWI era, such teaching received several hours in a freshman education class with an exam afterwards.

Starting in the late 1940's and through the 1950's the library sought something it never before had possessed, its own building. The whole school was desperately seeking more room for the post WWII flood of students into higher education that was swamping all areas of the school. As charted from 1939 to 1954 in a 1955 report by Mary Lee McCrory, College Librarian, and Dr. Sherwin Swartout, head of Audio-Visual Services, the following figures were obtained: seating capacity had risen from 130 to 131 while student enrollment had gone from 325 to 1000, the faculty had grown from 25 to 105, library staff from 1 to 7, volume count from 15,841 to 30,731, current periodicals from 100 to 268 and hours open from 47 to 79. A letter from Mrs. McCrory to President Tower noted that 5000 volumes of the library collection were kept in dead storage, and library office conditions were described this way: "It is necessary to shelve materials used frequently by our students even in the librarian's office (which she shares with three other staff members who have one desk). The workroom where all cataloging, marking, and other processing is done is approximately 8 x 22. At times as many as 5 librarians and 1 student assistant are working in this space."

Tight conditions indeed! Our senior cataloger, Joyce Ogden, who started here in 1959 has related to the writer the almost comic manner in which schedules and so on would have to be juggled simply to permit use of the limited work space. Yet relief was in sight, for the cornerstone of the first Drake Memorial Library (now known as Rakov) was laid in 1959, and the building occupied in 1961. That though shall be the subject of the next installment in this history of the library.

Charlie Cowling
DRAKE LIBRARY I: 1961-1974
Fifth in a series on the library's history

On June 10, 1961 the college library officially opened the doors of its new home, the Drake Memorial Library. The library was named in memory of Bernard Drake, a college administrator, and Ruth Drake, the campus school librarian, who had served at the college in the 1940s and '50s. The first library building on campus, it would serve in that capacity until 1974 when the library moved to the building currently occupied and the "old" Drake was converted to housing for various support offices and renamed Rakov.

In 1961, the post-WWII boom in higher education was rising ever faster and Brockport was no exception to this trend. There had been great expansion in the 1950s but the peak years were to come in the mid-1960s when buildings shot up across the campus, student enrollments and faculty members increased at an unprecedented rate, programs were added and money disbursed in a manner impossible to imagine in the present fiscal climate.

When Drake I opened in 1961, there were 47,000 volumes in the collection, 337 periodicals were received, the budget was $76,000 and staffing was provided by 6 librarians, 2 clerks, and student assistants. Just five years later the annual report for 1965/66 noted a collection of 108,000 volumes, 38,000 of which had been added only that year! Periodicals received numbered 1,300, the budget was $375,000, and staffing was provided by 12 librarians, 10 clerks and student assistants. Raj Madan, current director of the library, was the acquisitions librarian in the late 1960s and recalls that the concern was how to spend all the money by the end of the fiscal year. Howard Clayton, library director in the mid-1960s, went on periodic book buying expeditions to New York City as part of the effort to address that problem.

The expansion in the library reflects the tremendous growth of the college at that time. In 1961 there were 1,500 undergraduates, and by 1966 there were 4,000. The number of faculty members and program offerings increased correspondingly. In 1961 we were still essentially a teacher's college, and programs offered were in general elementary education and in health and physical education. Within just five years the education programs had expanded to include secondary math and science, and a new liberal arts program providing the opportunity for pursuing degrees in a number of subject disciplines. Brockport was becoming a full scale liberal arts college, and the library grew with it.

Looking at old issues of the Reference Newsletter, the predecessor of this publication, one finds that like many small college libraries of the time, the collection was cataloged according to the Dewey Decimal system. During the 1960s a major task was the recataloging of tens of thousands of books under the Library of Congress system, a more suitable format for a growing academic library.

Many technologies and services were introduced in that era, some still with us and others long since rendered obsolete. An IBM keypunch system for circulation, which was introduced in 1969 by Alyce Lampen, circulation librarian, is now long outmoded, the cards since used for scrap paper. One still with us is the self-guided taped tour of the library which is first noted in 1971.

Almost from the beginning space concerns began to arise as the college continued in its meteoric growth. Some temporary relief was obtained by moving the curriculum library (today's Special Materials Center) and the government documents collection across Kenyon Street to the Lathrop building.

In December of 1968 an article ran titled "New Library in Planning Stage". This planning was to result in the building the library now occupies which opened in the summer of 1974. That building and the library that grew within it will be the subject of the upcoming, and last, in this series on our library's history.

Charlie Cowling

DRAKE LIBRARY REVIEW

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EDITORS: Nan Pollot, Charlie Cowling
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Barbara White
CONSULTANTS: Eva Klafehn, James C. Dusen
In the last part of this series, we saw the construction of the first building dedicated solely for library purposes, Drake I, built in 1961. As related in the article, the growth of the College at that time was so great that the new building was rapidly outgrown. The problem was recognized and a new library building was constructed on the southwestern section of the campus in conjunction with a new administrative office building (Allen Building).

The monumental task of the move from the "old" Drake to the "new" Drake was accomplished in three weeks during May 1974. Professional movers moved library materials from Drake I to Drake II, and then library staff and volunteers pitched in to set up bookstacks and shelve books. To provide some sense of the scale of the project, think of the energy one's personal library can demand in a move, and then consider moving a library of 300,000 volumes!

Certainly the greatly needed extra space was welcomed, and all considered, the building has held up fairly well. The physical plant does reflect, though, the gradual winding down of state funding for SUNY in the cheaper construction employed when compared to the old library. The heating, cooling and ventilation systems failed to hold up well, and a decade later complaints of cold in winter and heat in summer had become common. Last year, a new satellite boiler system held out hope for better temperature control.

Many new services and technologies have become part of the library in the intervening 20 years. The lion's share of these changes have involved computers, a trend that continues today. A major connection was Drake's joining the OCLC...
community in 1974. This library computer network, now an international system, provides access to a database built of all members’ catalogs. Access to other records and the ability to copy them meant a great reduction in the workload of the cataloging department and in the number of staff needed.

On-line searches of computer databases became an available service in 1975. At that time, Drake itself had no computer connection; rather a reference librarian would take a person’s request, write up a search form, send it to the State Library in Albany by mail, and then in a week or so receive back the results for the search they had done there. It was not until 1983 that the library had its own computer linkage to databases provided by vendors like BRS and Dialog.

An innovation of tremendous significance was the move toward adoption of an integrated on-line library computer system in 1987. Ultimately the system grew to include circulation, serials, public access, cataloging, and acquisitions modules, but the first of course was the cataloging module, the foundation stone for all the others.

Raj Madan, director, Steven Buckley, associate director, Stuart Milligan, circulation, and Debra Ames and Joyce Ogden, cataloging, were leading figures in this complicated task. A related part of this and the circulation module, and a good example of the enormous clerical work involved in such projects, was the need to put bar codes in the several hundred thousand books in the circulating collection. This was accomplished over the course of a very hot summer by a staff team under the direction of Sue Donk, acquisitions, who organized a very efficient “bar coding bee”!

The advent of a computer catalog meant the end of the old card catalog and new opportunities for searching the library’s collections. Dynix’s provision of key word searching, combined with a “related works” feature that allows connection to titles with similar headings, makes possible searches, or “fishing expeditions,” that would not be possible in a card catalog.

In the last several years, an acquisitions module and a serials module have been added, giving the library a completely integrated system. Judy Jennejahn, head of acquisitions, and Carolyn McBride, head of serials, oversaw the installation of their respective modules. To again illustrate the massive amount of record keeping libraries must cope with, consider the data entry involved in transferring some 10,000 periodical records from the old card files to the new computer system! As a reward, patrons now have access to the latest information on periodicals, right up to the most recent issue received.

A new technology in the last two years has been the development of a network of computer-based indexes and catalogs in the reference area for public use. Databases on the network include ERIC, Academic Abstracts, a (Federal) Government Documents catalog, Disclosure (SEC 10K reports), NTDB (U.S. government-supplied trade statistics and reports), the current census, and the local library council union catalog. Peter Olevnik, head of information services, supported by Betty Chan and Mary Jo Gigliotti of that department and Stuart Milligan of circulation have successfully seen the network through its infancy, with all the attendant bugs and glitches, to a reliable maturity.

It is 100 years now since the first full-time librarian, Miss Janette Reynolds, was employed by the old Normal School. Like her, we strive to assist our patrons through ways both seen and unseen by patrons. She arranged the collection according to the then new Dewey Decimal System, a great improvement over the old-fashioned “alcove” system, and instituted a card catalog. We have moved from a card catalog to a computer catalog, again greatly increasing patron accessibility to the collection. She worked with the basic reference tools of her day, the Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature, Poole’s Index and others, where we work with a reference collection larger...
than her entire collection! An increasingly significant portion of our reference collection is computer based, not only locally but actually located in some cases outside of Brockport, as in the recent addition of CARL, an on-line index available to the public, and Internet, with which library staff are currently becoming familiar. In some ways, the demands on our time are much greater, as we have this much larger and more complex set of tools to be used by and explained to our patrons. Many of these tools, like CARL, are in a "pioneer" stage as it were, and are not yet consistently able to live up to their full potential. They also demand a proportionately greater amount of time to explain than paper sources. For example, with a print source one does not need to be instructed how to move one's eye down the page, but in computer sources the command for moving down the list must be explained. Certainly Miss Reynolds managed as her collection grew and as patron requests became more sophisticated with the increase in subject depth of the school's curriculum early this century, and we hope to manage equally well in providing library services to our patrons in this era of rapid change.

Charlie Cowling, special collections

Copying either by or for teachers for library reserve purposes is certainly a hydraheaded beast that, at times, taxes the best of animal tamers. The following questions and principles were deduced from sections 107 (fair use) and 108 (reproduction by libraries and archives) of the copyright act, the guidelines for classroom copying, and a model educational policy. The latter was produced by the American Library Association's Legal Counsel.

Question #1: Are there applicable limitations that teachers should be aware of with respect to reserve copying? If so, what are they?

Principle #1: The answer is YES. Copying that is done in libraries and archives has far narrower fair use exemptions than what is permissible for classroom teaching purposes. This is obvious from a surface reading of sections 107, 108 and their legislative histories.

Principle #1.5: Under section 108, only one copy or phone record of a work is permitted (see subsection 108(a)), whereas section 107 allows for multiple copies for classroom use.

However, the library does accept multiple copies placed on reserve because the copies are made by the teacher and we believe that the library reserve collections function as an extension for classroom readings. We also believe that a reasonable number of copies (in all cases, less than six) will depend on the number of students enrolled in a class, the difficulty and timing of the assignments, and the number of other courses which may assign the same material. In a word or two, we take our cues from section 107, not 108, in this instance. We allow a ratio of one copy for every 20 students enrolled in the class.

Question #2: Can teachers request more than one chapter from a book or more than one article from a periodical issue to be put on reserve?

Principle #2: The answer is NO. The classroom guidelines are very specific about this matter, and we have no legal recourse available to us to honor requests for multiple chapters or articles from the same work.

Any copied material fitting this description will be denied acceptance to the library reserve shelves or cabinets, and promptly will be returned to the owning faculty member.

Question #3: Are certain types of materials more, or less, copyright-protectible than others?