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Editor: Robert Munn. West Virginia University. Morgantown, W. Va.
Associate Editor and Business Manager: Ruth Stemple, West Virginia University.

Editorial Assistants:

Public Libraries.....Joan Collett. West Virginia Library Commission. Spencer.

TWO PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN IRELAND

By

DR. ROBERT L. JOHNSON, JR.
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

The Marsh Library, Dublin, and the Public Library, Armagh, are public libraries, yet in a sense not understood in this country. Both are open to the public - and in that usage their title would be understood here - but they are public in the British sense in that they possess state charters and are incorporated. Marsh's Library was incorporated in 1707 and the Public Library, Armagh, in 1771.

I

Narcissus Marsh (1638-1713) founded his library when he was Archbishop of Dublin. Previously as Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, he had seen regulations in force in the library there that had made it useless to the public. Even in the case of students, rules were so extreme that they could not work without interruption. These experiences were not lost on Marsh and after he became archbishop he took as one of his good works the provision of a library for the public, including the students of TCD. The nucleus of this collection was the library of Stillingfleet, offered for sale after the Bishop had died in March of 1699. For these books, Marsh paid some 2500 pounds. To this fine library, Marsh added from his own books and later from the collection of the Huguenot Tannequy Le Fevre, Madame Dacier's father, who died in 1672. Also added were manuscripts from the library of Dudley Loftus (1619-95), the great jurist and orientalist. This provided about 25,000 volumes and 200 manuscripts. It is a miscellaneous collection, mainly of 16th and 17th century books including some interesting incunabula. In 1764, Harris, the editor of Ware, wrote that from his long experience the Marsh Library was the most useful in Ireland, "being open to all strangers and at all reasonable

time." However, in fairness, it must be recognized that the Library has ceased to keep pace with those enlightened and rational times. Its endowment, bountiful for those times, has suffered from inflation, and today the library is primarily of interest to the antiquarian, the historian, and the collector of literary miscellanea, though in its latitude it is still a superb library.

The Marsh Library is housed in a building by Sir William Robinson located to the southeast of the Cathedral of St. Patrick's on St. Patrick's Close in the grounds of the palace of the St. Sepulchre. The building, erected in 1707, today presents a picture of Georgian charm in the tree-shaded high-walled deanery. Marsh must have regarded it as a favorite place of his, for he was buried in a vault of St. Patrick's adjoining the Library.

It was to the deanery of Saint Patrick's, and the ex officio headship of the Library, that Marsh presented Jonathon Swift, who served from 1713 to 1745. The deanery was once attached to the Library and Dean Swift must many times have visited its rooms. As the present librarian has told me, the place is haunted and often he had imagined Dean Swift roaming through the Library. Truly Marsh has witnessed macabre scenes; one cannot forget that here occurred the midnight burial of Stella, that sight which Swift could not endure and from which he removed to another bedroom to avoid the light in the church.

I first visited the Marsh Library in the winter of 1952-3. I was eager to determine if one of its manuscripts, an archdeacon's formulary, was a duplicate of another at Armagh. Knowing the custom of European libraries, of

opening at limited hours, and wishing to avoid disappointment, I took out my copy of the Blue Guide to Ireland, a most useful vademecum and found that its open hours were Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11 to 12 AM and from 3 to 4:30 PM and that on Saturdays it was open from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. From other library ancillae, I found that there was a written catalogue with author, title, and subject entries and that the staff was one male assistant. I also learned that Newport B. White, professor of ecclesiastical history at Trinity and authority on Irish monasticism, was present keeper of the Library. With this information, I applied to the Library at the appropriate time, but I confess that I was not prepared for what I encountered there.

The Library must be approached upstairs. Entry is through a small vestibule over which are inscribed the names of its various keepers. You then pass into what the Blue Guide calls a "charming suite of rooms practically untouched since the founder's day." The floor plan of the library is U-shaped. The base of the U and one of its sides contain stalls extending from the wall into the aisles and holding the books. The other side of the U is the entrance, containing the properties of the librarian, some tables, the catalogue. This is heated by a fireplace before which are some easy chairs. The general atmosphere is that of the apartments of an 18th century gentleman surrounded by what he regarded as best in life.

In this pleasant place I made my acquaintance with the librarian. It had been a cold and wet afternoon, and the librarian had warmed himself with port and the coals of his fire. The librarian, alone with his leisure, his thoughts, and his grand surroundings, perhaps resented my intrusion, but a perfect gentleman, such an attitude, if it existed, did not show. I asked him to show me around the library which he did, describing the rooms, stalls, and the books. It was at this

time that he told me the story of Dean Swift. When we had returned from our tour, we got down to my business, the investigation of the archdeacon's formula. This was brought from the shelves and placed on a table for me. As the handwriting was not always clear I called the librarian over for help. It was at that time that the librarian's unsteadiness proclaimed itself as his posture wavered over the page.

Another amazing thing was revealed in the care of the document. A table of contents on ordinary ruled theme paper was pasted to the front cover and throughout were penciled comments glossing the text. Obviously, the library, so unfrequented, had become in the mind of the keeper his own property, and to him, the public, so uncaring about its content, would likewise be uncaring about its condition. It is a great misfortune that some foundation does not provide funds for the preservation of a fine collection of books, and at the same time publicize for scholars outside its neighborhood its estimable value.

II

Richard Robinson (1709-94) founded his library when he was Archbishop of Armagh. Well endowed with funds and possessed of the ambition of a builder, Robinson, like Augustus who found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble, found Armagh a village of mud and left it a handsome town. In all, he spent some 35,000 pounds in public works, chapels of ease in the large parishes, a new classical school, the Armagh Observatory, a fine new marble archiepiscopal palace, the repair and beautification of the cathedral. Among these, the real ornament of his effort was the erection of the Public Library in 1771. It is on the hill which dominates the city, located amongst the cathedral, the deanery, the infirmary, and the residences of the vicars choral. The library, attached to the deanery, is in fact the dean's library. Built in the Georgian style, it is

part of the tone that Robinson gave the city and which exists to this day. Robinson was fond of books and chose the appropriate Greek inscription over the entrance, which translated reads "The healing of the mind." Robinson along with the building provided in 1781 a solid endowment for the Library, and while the funds for its maintenance have suffered from inflation like Marsh's, good management and administration with support from the Church of Ireland and the other archbishops has continued a well-run institution to the present. On this score, it is far superior to Marsh's. The collection numbers 20,000 volumes and is among the foremost in Ireland. Its manuscripts are particularly useful for geneology, but the real treasures are the archiepiscopal registers of the See of Armagh. Indeed, it was just these registers that drew me to Ireland.

As I have said previously, the librarian is always the dean of Armagh, but the real administrator is the assistant librarian. The greatest of these was William Reeves, later Bishop of Down. Everywhere in the Library you see the imprint of his effort. It was Reeves who made the written catalogue in use today; it was he who transcribed the already mentioned registers; it was he who edited another treasure of the Library, the Visitation of Archbishop Colton. But it was also from the hands of Reeves that the collection suffered great damage. The Visitation was in his personal care when he died and was sold by his widow, making its way through the hands of various bibliophiles until it reached the British Museum where it may still be seen, stamped "The Property of the Armagh Public Library." It was Reeves, who following inexpert paleographical advice, used the juice of galls to bring up fading ink with the result that the juice oxidized and whole sections appeared blackened. It is as if it were painted in ink. But this is to leap ahead of the tale.

I had gone to Armagh on a research grant from the University of Wisconsin specifically to study the earliest of these archiepiscopal registers. I prepared myself from the Blue Guide; it was open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 11 AM to 1 PM and from 2 to 4 PM; it was closed on Saturday afternoons and Sundays together with the greater religious holidays. The staff was one male assistant, whom I knew to be Mr. Hamilton.

One clear but cold day I made my first visit. I climbed the hill, found the finely styled Library and entered. The vestibule is terra cotta colored and is decorated with antiquities from the vicinity. You then climb stairs into the library proper and enter into a long room, its walls surrounded with shelves of books; above, a narrow balcony runs around the four sides catching the lower floor's overflow. It has an elegant 18th century atmosphere. I first made the acquaintance of the keeper, inquired of the registers, and was led to the muniment room off to one side. There I was seated at a table covered with green felt. A safe in one corner was opened, and the registers were revealed. I could have brought to me at any one time, one register and the accompanying volume of transcription. If I desired another, the first had to be returned and the second then brought forth. It was in this way that I began to examine the materials that were to occupy me continuously for the next two years.

The registers were bound in eight volumes and include documents as early as Magna Carta and as late as the reformation of Henry VIII. While some of the documents are on parchment, most are on paper, the earliest in Ireland. The documents are the oldest and most complete papers of the Irish Church. They contain autographs of the famous ecclesiastics of the primatial See of Armagh, beginning with Richard Fitzralph and ending with James Ussher. It was the last named prelate who gather-

ed the papers together and arranged for their binding. Truly they are valuable and deserve the elaborate precautions upon which the keeper insists. It is by the merest chance that the registers survived the 1916 "troubles" in Ireland. The government had anticipated local disturbances and had ordered that all episcopal and parish papers, unless left in a fireproof safe, should be turned over to the Public Records Office, Dublin. Ironically, the rebellion broke out in Dublin with the insurgents entrenched along a line anchored at one end in the Public Records Office and at the other in the Gresham Hotel. The rebels held out in the Records Office, taking the manuscripts they found to pile in the windows as barricades. In the end, they were only dislodged by a gunboat steaming up the Liffey and dropping a few shells inside, setting the place on fire, and ending in a single stroke a great portion of Ireland's medieval

history. Needless to say, Armagh had a safe.

It is apparent that the two libraries I have described have similarities apart from their state charters and so naturally group together. Both are roughly of the same size, both are 18th century institutions, both are dean's libraries, one the outgrowth of the Cathedral of Saint Patrick's, Dublin, and the other, that of the Cathedral of Saint Patrick's, Armagh, and both were founded by archbishops. Both need more of the loving attention that scholars give books, their containers, and their keepers. This need not be expected however, for when these libraries were created the belief was strong that mankind's restraints could only be removed by reason distilled from a study of his past and ours is an age that believes only the immediate is new and worthwhile and the past best forgotten.

MR. BUTLER LEAVES W V U

Mr. Charles E. Butler, Librarian of West Virginia University since 1949, resigned in March to accept the Librarianship of Canisius College, Buffalo, New York. Mr. Butler had a distinguished library career in West Virginia. He served as Librarian of Kanawha County from 1939 to 1949, with time out for military service. He was President of the West Virginia Library Association in 1949-50. During his administration, the University Library made great strides toward becoming a real university library.

Over 100,000 volumes were added to the collection. The increase in the quality of the collection -- while less spectacular -- will prove to be of even greater benefit to future generations of students. Both the University and the Library Association will sorely miss the presence of a fine librarian and a truly Civilized Man--one who, though highly competent in the technicalities of his chosen profession, was able to take a broader view of our affairs than most of us could manage. We wish him great success and happiness in his new position.

SPECIAL EDITIONS
OF
WEST VIRGINIA NEWSPAPERS
ON MICROFILM

The second and third reels of a proposed series of special editions of West Virginia newspapers on microfilm have been prepared by the West Virginia Collection of the University Library. Additional reels are now in preparation. Correspondence from persons and institutions holding issues which might be included in future reels would be welcomed by the West Virginia Collection.

Reel 2

1. Beckley Post Herald. 1950 Aug 26. Raleigh County Golden Jubilee. 5 sections, 136pp.
2. Buckhannon Record. 1931 Nov 2. Centennial Celebration. 40p.
3. Clarksburg Daily Telegram. 1906 May 9. Knights Templar Edition. 28p.
4. Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram. 1942. Civilian Defense Supplement. 104p.
5. Fairmont Times-West Virginian. 1941 Aug 2. Fairmont Welcomes Westinghouse Edition. 8 sections, 104p.
6. Hinton Daily News. 1952 Nov 29. Hinton's Mid-Century Edition. 50p.
7. Martinsburg News. 1937 March 26. Historical Section, 7p.
8. Montgomery Herald. 1946 May 9. West Virginia Tech's Golden Anniversary Edition, 1896-1946. 24p.
9. Morgantown New Dominion. 1903, Feb. Prosperity & Education Edition. 53p.
10. Morgantown Morgantown Post. 1941 July 16. Know Morgantown Edition. 58p.
11. Parkersburg News. 1903 June 24. Special Edition on Grafton. 12p.
12. Piedmont Herald. 1894 April 20. Extra Edition. 16p.
13. Princeton Observer. 1937 Aug 5. Historical Edition, 1837-1937. 44p.
14. Romney Hampshire Review. 1940 Nov 6. John J. Cornwell Golden Anniversary Supplement. 4p.

Reel 3

1. Ronceverte West Virginia News. 1938 June 16. Greenbrier County 160th Anniversary Edition. 5 sections, 40p.
2. Welch Daily News. 1944. Historical and Industrial Edition.
3. Wheeling Intelligencer. 1888 March 31. Special State Development Edition. 16p.

Intelligencer. 1902 Aug 24. 50th Anniversary Souvenir Edition. 59p.

Intelligencer. 1952 Aug 24. Centennial Edition, 1852-1952. 62p.
4. Wheeling Register. 1912 May 23. Special 1912 Edition. 16p.
5. Wheeling Deutsche Zeitung. 1906. Progress Edition. 48p.
6. Morgantown Chronicle. 1907 Dec 24. Industrial Edition. 16p.
7. Charleston Gazette. 1956 April 10. Industrial Progress in West Virginia. 20p.
8. Oil City Derrick. 1901 Sept 5. Drake Memorial Supplement. 8p.
9. Bluefield Sunset News. Dec 6, 1951. In Memoriam. (10th Anniversary of Bombing of Pearl Harbor). 22p.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

On June 21 a letter from Sherman Adams, Assistant to President Eisenhower, notified me the Library Services Bill was signed by the President on June 19. At the time President Eisenhower declared: "The Library Services Bill . . . represents an effort to stimulate the States and local communities to increase library services available to rural Americans. It shows promise of leading to a significant enrichment of lives of millions of Americans, which, I am confident, will be continued by the States when this limited Federal program comes to an end."

The A.L.A. (Washington Office) is now attempting to get funds from Congress to implement the Bill for the year 1956/1957.

The passage of the Bill is certainly good news to all librarians. To those who have given aid toward its passage we should express our appreciation. Each West Virginia Senator and Congressman supported this legislation. In the House of Representatives Library Services Bills were submitted by Bailey, Burnside, Byrd, Kee, and Mollohan. In the Senate, Neely was a co-sponsor of the Bill. Other evidences of their support and interest appear in the Congressional Record and reports of the Committee hearings. State Librarians may be particularly proud of the record of their Representatives and Senators in support of this national legislation.

To Mr. John Bennett and Mr. Mark Crum we extend our appreciation. As Federal Coordinators for the past two years they have kept us informed as to the status of the Library Services Bill. Often they urged us from procrastination to action. Who of us could

fail to respond to John's communication of April 20th. He succinctly explained the situation, directed our action, and provided material with which to work--including information on "How To Write Your Congressman."

Miss Dora Ruth Parks and Mr. Omar A. Bacon actively supported the Bill also. Miss Parks was instrumental in having Mrs. Dean Johnson of Buckhannon attend the House Committee hearing on the Bill. Mr. Bacon, as Extension Committee Chairman, compiled a report on West Virginia's Need for the Library Services Bill." This report furnished our Congressmen with needed information on the library situation in the State.

Remember to write a letter of "thanks" to your Congressman and Senator.

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"Congratulations to you, Mrs. Otis G. Wilson," and a "thank you" for time and inspiration you have given to library development in your State. The W.V.L.A. is glad you received national recognition from the American Library Association for your work.

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The Constitution Committee has prepared a tentative constitution for submission to the Executive Board. At present there is difficulty in establishing a meeting date convenient to all members. It is hoped the Board will meet soon for discussion of the proposed constitution.

Floyd W. Miller
President, W.V.L.A.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

EDITOR'S PLEA

We must assume that the "Field" has been doing nothing and thus has no news, or (perish the thought) the news is not considered fit for a family magazine. If indeed you have been doing nothing, you most certainly owe it to your colleagues to explain just how you manage such a delightful state of affairs and still remain on the payroll.

Come now, ladies and gentlemen, surely you plan to do something (just one little old thing) during the next few months which will gladden, edify or instruct your brethren. Let us know. This journal next goes to press on or about September 20. Do send in something. After all, Ohio County is not the only library in the State—although at the moment it seems to us to be the best.

OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Spring activities at the Ohio County Public Library have been both varied and successful. One of the most unusual projects was the Musical Story Hour conducted by students of St. Joseph's Academy. These selected girls

prepared fine programs utilizing books of both the Children's Department and the Music Department, and were advised by the Music Librarian. The attendance at all sessions was constant and interested.

City-County Government Day was launched from the Library by the assembling of forty five Juniors from all local high schools early on the morning of May 1st. They were sponsored by the Kiwanis Club.

The Library supplied an exhibit of books on "Country Living" in cooperation with the Farm Women. Two other exhibits highlighted the Herald Tribune's Spring Book Festival, and Music Week. The Oglebay Institute's Recreation Workshop held May 5th displayed a collection of the Library's books on games, crafts and folk dancing.

One of the most gratifying trends noted this past scholastic year was the increased attendance at the library of conducted classes which stayed to work. The noticeable upswing in reference work accomplished by pupils at all grade levels was equally heartening.

HOW ARE YOU DOING

A study of librarians' salaries released Thursday (June 21) shows that while professional librarians' salaries have increased 14 per cent since 1952 and are just about on a par with teachers' salaries, they are far below the income of professional and semi-professional persons estimated by the Federal Reserve Board.

The study, recently completed, is based on information gathered in 1955. It was made public at a meeting of the Board on Personnel Administration of the American Library Association during the 75th Annual Conference of the ALA in Miami Beach. The detailed report "Salaries of Library Personnel, 1955" is available from the ALA Publishing Department.

The data was supplied by 1,053 libraries of all types and covered 28,294 positions. In comparing the annual median salary of librarians--\$4,311.36--with the median salary for teachers--\$4,100--it was pointed out that the figure for teachers did not include salaries of school administrators, while the librarians' median salary figure included the salaries of the highest paid chief librarians. The Federal Reserve Board's "spending unit" figure for professionals and semi-professionals was \$7,380.

Some of the non-professionals working in libraries have fared better than the professionals, according to the study. Salaries of stenographers increased 15.3 per cent; senior clerks, 18.5 per cent; and junior clerks, 15.1 per cent. The increase for all non-professional positions in 1955 was 12.1 per cent over 1952.

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