

OREGON STATE LIBRARY SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records of the Oregon State Library consist of correspondence, reports, publications, press releases, bibliographies and book lists, newsletters, circulation and accession records, financial records, photographs, architectural drawings, and blueprints. The records date from the establishment of the library as a separate agency in 1905 until 1976 and present a fairly complete picture of the activities and programs of the library.

The records document the internal administration of the library as well as the interaction of the library with other Oregon state agencies. The library supplied books and other resources to state agencies and served as an exchange center by providing information about Oregon and Oregon government publications to people and organizations in other states and by acquiring documents and information from agencies and organizations in other states for the library collection and for the state's legislators and officials.

An important mission of the library that is documented quite well in these records is providing library services to Oregon citizens, especially those in rural areas not served by county or city libraries. The records document the traveling library program and assistance to school libraries, public libraries, and organizations such as the grange, women's clubs, and debate societies. The library served as a resource center disseminating information and advice about books and library practice to libraries and librarians around the state.

Because of this focus outside of state government, the library records provide interesting views of people, politics, and life in small towns and rural areas of the state. Insight into rural political, cultural, and social life can be found in the field visit section of the administrative correspondence series, which describes trips by a librarian throughout eastern Oregon to help set up local libraries and to demonstrate library services at county fairs. Additional series which document these types of activities are Field Services Reports and Correspondence, Public Library Reports and Correspondence, Traveling Library Records, and the Local Library Correspondence.

Insight into the cultural life of Oregonians can be gained by an examination of the types of books borrowed by Oregonians and recommended to schools, organizations, local libraries, and the general public by the state library. This information can be obtained from the Circulation Records, Traveling Library Records, Books Lists, Publications, and Accession Records.

The state librarians were actively involved in their profession nationally. Their participation in the conferences and committees of library professional

OREGON STATE LIBRARY -- -- SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE -- -- Page 2

organizations and their wide ranging contacts with librarians in Oregon and throughout the United States is clearly documented.

The important role that women have played in the history of the Oregon State Library is evident in the correspondence of the state librarians Cornelia Marvin (1905-1928), Virginia C. Bacon (1929-1930), Harriet C. Long (1930-1941), Eleanor Stephens (1941-1958), Eloise Ebert (1959-1976), and Assistant and Acting Librarian Mirpah Blair (1913-1949).

In the twentieth century, library science was a field open to women and the records of the Oregon State Library describe the workings of a network of female professionals and the feminization of a profession. The state librarians believed that librarianship was a profession requiring specialized training and that Oregon libraries and librarians should maintain professional standards. Correspondence with librarians, library schools, and women who were considering becoming librarians contains recommendations to libraries of persons to fill vacant positions and letters of reference for job seekers as well as letters discussing job openings and library education and training.

Information about librarianship as a profession open to women can also be gained from the section on scholarships within the administrative correspondence section, which the library offered for graduate study in library schools, and in the sections containing correspondence with other states, especially Washington, Idaho, and California.

The new accession number for the Oregon State Library Records is 89A-35. The records of the Oregon State Library were originally accessioned into the Archives under accession numbers: 53-11, 53-33, 53-35, 53-41, 59I-18, 61-8, 61A-41, 64A-77, 68A-25, 68A-50, 69A-9, 69A-67, 71A-5, 71A-101, 76A-53, and 76A-54.

Total size of accession is 67.75 cubic feet.