

Administrative Overview
Oregon State Library
December 2003

Introduction

The Territorial Legislature established a library in 1848 and it continued to function throughout the nineteenth century. The State Library was established in 1905 and in 1913 it was differentiated from the Supreme Court Law Library. In 1973, the State Archives was separated from the State Library. The mission of the Oregon State Library is to provide quality information services to state government; provide reading materials to blind and print-disabled Oregonians; and to provide leadership, grants, and other assistance to improve local library service for all Oregonians. The library is administered by a seven-member board that selects the State Librarian. The operation of the library and the functions of the board are governed by ORS 357.

History

The history of a state-supported library in Oregon began on August 14, 1848, when Oregon's Territorial Assembly funded the purchase of a Territorial Library and appointed Aaron Wait as the first territorial librarian. In 1852, the Territorial Legislature provided funds for a salary for the librarian and to relocate the library to Salem. A fire in 1855 destroyed the library's holdings, but under the direction of a new librarian the collection of books was renewed.

The first State Legislative Assembly established an annual budget of \$400 to purchase books and fund the library. In 1864, the Secretary of State was designated as superintendent of the State Library. In 1874, the library moved to the State Capitol Building. The 1878 Legislative Assembly appropriated \$1,200 to improve the library -- "to make it one of which the state might be proud." Although improvements were made, a storm blew the roof off the Capitol Building in 1889 and soaked the library's holdings.

The Oregon State Library in its modern form was established in 1905 when the Oregon State Library Commission was organized and provisions were made for the separate care of law books and for the separate collection of documents and books. Cornelia Marvin was appointed as the first secretary of the Oregon Library Commission. The commission consisted of the Governor, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, president of the state university (University of Oregon), librarian of the Portland Library Association, and one appointee.

An annual tax levy was created in 1905 to fund book purchases for school libraries. The books purchased came from a list selected by the Commission. The Commission also provided traveling and debate libraries and helped study clubs, granges, and home study programs in selecting materials for their use.

In 1913, the Oregon Library Commission formally became the Board of Trustees of the Oregon State Library. The trustees were given custody of all books and publications under the care of the commission and all the federal and state documents and general books previously held by the Supreme Court Library (Territorial Library). Functions and collection policies for the Supreme Court Library were then able to focus entirely on law materials.

World War I led to the addition of war service responsibilities to the State Library. Educational courses, distribution of books and pamphlets to homemakers and military camps, and establishment of the War Libraries Fund were added functions of the State Library. State Librarian Cornelia Marvin was appointed State Historian of Defense for Oregon and was assigned to collect and preserve the records of Oregon's war service. The 1921 Legislative Assembly extended this project by granting \$2,500 to finish gathering these records.

In 1932, the Library of Congress designated the State Library as a Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Legislation in 1933 changed the personnel of the Board of Trustees to consist of the Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chancellor of the Oregon State System of Higher Education, librarian of the Portland Library Association, and three individuals appointed by the Governor. The 1930's also saw the need for a new library building. Economic conditions brought on by the Great Depression, however, left little room in the

state budget for a new physical plant. In 1935, the Public Works Administration provided \$350,000 for a new building, but because of limitations in its Constitution, the state was unable to accept this money. The 1939 Legislative Assembly amended the Constitution enabling the state to accept federal aid including Works Progress Administration funds to build the present library building on the Capitol Mall. Works Progress Administration funds also provided the library with staff to operate library centers, bookmobiles, and to repair and clean the holdings of the state's libraries. Legislation passed in 1939 called for formation of a regional library system.

The State Library's functions expanded again during World War II. Books were supplied to Oregon military camps and reading courses were offered to the men and women at these camps. The State Library coordinated the state's participation in the Victory Book Campaign. The budget for the 1945-1947 biennium included \$15,000 to hire a full-time archivist. David C. Dunniway was hired as the first State Archivist and began work on January 1, 1946. The responsibilities of the newly created Archives Division included preservation and custody of the records of Oregon government, care of special collections in the State Library, surveys and appraisals of stored records of state and county agencies, and microfilming. The archives remained part of the State Library until 1973 when it was transferred to the Secretary of State's office.

Legislation passed in 1953 removed authority from the State Library for pooled purchasing of books for public schools, improved the document exchange program at the State Library, and simplified the State Library laws. Nineteen fifty-five legislation changed the "ex-officio" Board of Trustees to a seven-member board appointed by the Governor. This was done to forward the interests of the library more effectively and to assure a larger geographical representation of ideas by appointing individuals from various regions of the state. Passage of the Federal Library Services Act in 1957 led to appropriation of matching state funds to implement the State Library's Plan for Rural Library Services.

Budget cuts hampered State Library programs during the 1960's and 1970's. However, in 1969 the Legislative Assembly appropriated \$80,000, in addition to federal funds received, for the library to begin providing Talking Book and Braille Services to blind and print-disabled Oregonians in partnership with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at the Library of Congress. Previously, the Multnomah County Library provided this service.

In 1992, the library worked with members of the Oregon Library Association and the Interim Committee on Education to study a wide range of library issues. It drafted legislation that was introduced during the 1993 legislative session. One bill created the Ready to Read Grant Program to improve public library service to Oregon's children. Another bill created a State Library assessment whereby state agencies are assessed for State Library services. This assessment replaced General Fund money and Federal Library Services and Construction Act funds in the State Library budget. The bill directed that the federal funds be used for local library resource sharing programs. Since 1993, the State Library has continued with the same revenue sources. Library services to state government have increased significantly.

Current Organization

In 2003, the State Library consists of the State Library Board, Administration, Government Research and Electronic Services, Talking Book and Braille Services, and Library Development Services.

The State Library Board appoints the State Librarian, formulates general policies, and adopts rules for State Library operation. The board proposes legislation, adopts long-range plans, reviews budgets, and designates libraries as depository libraries for state publications. The board also appoints advisory councils that make recommendation to the board regarding plans and policies.

State Library Administration is responsible for overall management of the library under guidance from the board. The State Librarian oversees subordinate divisions including Government Research and Electronic Services, Talking Book and Braille Services, and Library Development. Administration provides support to the State Library Board. It also provides accounting, administrative rule, business management, contracting, purchasing, payroll, personnel, and public relations functions. In addition, Administration oversees volunteer workers.

Government Research and Electronic Services is responsible for maintaining and using library resources of all types for the benefit of library customers. Functions include managing library collections of all types and formats and lending materials. It provides electronic resources and research assistance to state agency customers, other libraries, and corresponding and walk-in customers. The division also operates an information Web site for state government employees, SmartORgov (www.smartorgov.org), that is heavily used.

Talking Books and Braille Services is part of a network of regional libraries established to meet the reading needs of blind and print-disabled Oregonians. The State Library contributes space to house the collection and staff to circulate reading materials by mail to Oregonians who qualify.

The responsibilities of Library Development Services include oversight of statewide library planning and administration of state and federal library programs. This division also provides consulting services to local libraries and local governments to help develop and enhance library services. Library Development Services also manages activities of the Oregon Center for the Book.

State Librarians

Cornelia Marvin, 1905-1928

Virginia C. Bacon, 1929-1930

Harriet C. Long, 1930-1941

Eleanor Stephens, 1941-1958

Eloise Ebert, 1959-1976

Mirpah Blair, 1913-1949 [Assistant and Acting Librarian]

Marcia Lowell, 1977-1983

Wesley A. Doak, 1983-1991

Jim Scheppke, 1991-present

Chronology

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| 1848 | Five thousand dollars appropriated to purchase a territorial library. |
| 1849-1851 | Act passed to pay the territorial librarian an annual salary of two hundred fifty dollars. |
| 1851-1852 | Library moved to Salem. |
| 1855 | Fire destroyed the library and its holdings. Legislature appropriated funds to replace lost books. |
| 1860 | State Librarian (Act of 1860) elected every two years by Legislative Assembly functioning under the direction of the Governor. |
| 1874 | The library moved to the State Capitol building. |
| 1878 | Legislature appropriated twelve hundred dollars to make the library "one of which the state might be proud." |
| 1889 | A wind and rainstorm blew the roof off the capitol and soaked the library's holdings. |
| 1905 | Two state libraries recognized by the adoption of two laws. One act established the Secretary of State with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as the regulating body for the State Library. The other act established the Oregon Library Commission to consist of the Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, president of the state university (University of Oregon), librarian of the Library Association of Portland, and one appointee. |

- 1913 Library commission becomes the Board of Trustees for the Oregon State Library. What had been known as the State Library became the Supreme Court Library.
- 1935 Public Works Administration building program's allotment of \$350,000 not used because of Oregon constitutional limitations.
- 1939 Legislation allowing acceptance of federal aid passed. The Works Progress Administration provided funding for a new State Library building.
- 1946 Legislation appropriated \$15,000 for appointment of a state archivist. David C. Duniway named to the position.
- 1953 State Library authority for pooled purchase of books for public schools was removed.
- 1955 Legislation provided for appointment of a seven-member board to replace the "ex-officio" Board of Trustees.
- 1956 Federal Library Services Act became law.
- 1957 State Library Plan for Rural Library Services approved.
Matching funds provided by the state to implement rural library program.
- 1969 Legislature appropriated \$80,000 to increase the State Library's participation in the federal program for the blind and physically handicapped.
- 1973 State Archives Division transferred to the Secretary of State.
- 1973 Library became more active in the distribution of federal funds.
- 1993 State Library funding source changed from General Fund to assessments of state agencies excluding Higher Education.

Bibliography

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- A Half-Century of Reading in Oregon. Oregon State Library, 1955.
- Administrative History, State Library. Oregon State Archives, 1987.
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- Biennial Report of the Oregon State Library, 1960, 1999-2001.
- History of the Oregon Supreme Court Law Library as presented to the Marion County Historical Society. Bruce Harbaugh, 1980.
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- Oregon State Library, Governor's Recommended Budget Narrative, 2001-2003.
- Oregon State Laws, 1845-1864, 1905, 1913, 1921, 1927, 1932, 1939, 1942, 1945, 1949, 1952-1957, 1967, 1973, 1993-2001.
- Outreach Visitors Guide for Assisting Blind and Physically Handicapped Library Users. Oregon State Library, 1983.

Primary Statutes and Administrative Rule Chapters

- Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 357
- Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 543