

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS

FOR

THE YEAR 1875.



WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1876.

REPORT.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,

Washington, January 1, 1876.

The undersigned submits herewith his annual report, embracing the period of thirteen months, or from the 1st of December, 1874, to the 31st of December, 1875. The Joint Committee on the Library not having been organized until late in December, and holding no session until January, it has been deemed best, with the assent of the chairman, to bring the statistics of the Library and the copyright department up to January 1, thus rendering it possible to lay before Congress the figures of the Library business for the calendar year hereafter, beginning with January instead of December. This is deemed preferable for obvious reasons of convenience, exhibiting the annals of copyright publications for each calendar year, instead of from one arbitrary date to another.

I have again to report a large increase in the numerical extent of the Library. My last report exhibited an aggregate of 274,157 volumes, on the 1st of December, 1874. The present enumeration shows a total of 293,507 volumes, of which there have been added during the last thirteen months 19,350 volumes. Out of this aggregate, the law department contains 34,516 volumes, and the miscellaneous library 258,991 volumes. To these figures are to be added nearly 60,000 pamphlets, bound and unbound.

The additions to the Library have been from the following sources, respectively:

	Books.	Pamphlets.
By purchase	7,654	280
By copyright	8,062	4,630
By deposit of the Smithsonian Institution	1,420	1,985
By donation, (including State documents)	945	240
By exchanges	1,269	238
Total	19,350	7,373

The following table shows the whole number of articles received at the Library under the laws which make it the depository of all copyright matter:

Books	8,062
Periodicals	7,533
Musical compositions	6,598
Dramatic compositions	280
Photographs	1,149
Engravings and chromos	1,490
Maps, charts, and drawings	858
Prints	1,639
Total	27,609

The copyright business of the year 1875 shows a steady increase of entries in each class of publications which remain subjects of copyright. Prints and labels used for manufactured articles having been excluded from entry in the office of the Librarian of Congress by act taking effect August 1, 1874, and made subject to registry in the Patent-Office, it was anticipated that there would be a decrease in the aggregate copyright business to nearly the amount of such entries, which had averaged 5,000 per annum for years past. But the actual falling off of entries has been only about one thousand for the past twelve months, as compared with 1873, and two thousand as compared with 1874, while the aggregate receipts are only about \$1,500 below those of previous years, instead of \$5,000, as represented by the rejected labels, thus showing that the deficit in this item has been much more than made up by increased entries of other copyright publications, while the Patent-Office has derived a considerable revenue from the registry of labels.

The actual number of entries of copyrights for the twelve months ending December 1, 1875, was 14,364, and for the thirteen months ending January 1, 1876, 15,927. The cash receipts paid into the Treasury were for the same twelve months \$11,872, and for the thirteen months closing December 31, 1875, \$13,151.50.

The unexpended balances of funds under charge of the Joint Committee on the Library were as follows, January 1, 1876 :

Fund for increase of Library.....	\$12,232 74
Fund for contingent expenses of Library.....	2,968 47
Fund for expense of exchanging public documents.....	1,200 00
Fund for purchase and printing of unpublished historical documents relating to the early French discoveries in the Northwest and on the Mississippi.....	10,000 00
Fund for ornamenting the Capitol with works of art.....	9,327 51
Fund for completion of three volumes of Wilkes's Exploring Expedition ..	4,814 51
Fund for salaries in Botanic Garden and greenhouses	6,977 75
Fund for improving Botanic Garden	1,939 83
Fund to procure plans for accommodation of the Library	1,000 00
Fund for portraits of Presidents of the United States.....	850 00

The undersigned presented during the last Congress, in a special report, a plan for preparing a complete index to the documents, debates, and laws of Congress, treated by topics in a single alphabet. By recommendation of the Committee on the Library, Congress granted two additional assistants to be employed upon this work. The indexing has gone forward with vigor, though with a very small force, during the past twelve months, about two hundred volumes having already been indexed. Meanwhile, a proposition has been made from the trustees of the Boston Public Library, in which an approximately full index has been prepared to the congressional documents alone, that this manuscript index should be published at the expense of the Government, on such conditions of distribution as might meet the approbation of Congress. The undersigned recommends, in view of the large amount of time and expense that must necessarily be consumed in indexing the

documents especially, (numbering about fourteen hundred volumes,) that the already accomplished work of the officers of the Boston Public Library should be availed of as the basis of an index to the documents, expanding and verifying it throughout as may seem desirable upon full examination of the material. At the same time it would not, in the judgment of the undersigned, be expedient to print this index to the documents separately. An undertaking so important should be made comprehensive and not fragmentary in plan. Every topic referred to in such an index has its complement in the debates of Congress, and, to a large extent, in the statutes passed by that body. To bring together in one alphabetical index of topics, references to the whole printed material bearing upon each subject, whether in the documents, the debates, or the laws, arranged systematically in chronological order, is a cardinal necessity. Such an index would be of incalculable permanent value, not only to Congress and to every executive and judicial officer, but to the student of our political history and to the people at large. After the experience already acquired in preparing such an index, the undersigned thinks that the references to the debates and laws can be completed within two years' time, provided a special appropriation be made for the employment of temporary clerical aid. The subject is earnestly recommended to the attention of Congress.

The catalogue force of the Library has been continuously employed for many months upon the preparation of the new general catalogue which it is proposed to issue during the coming year, 1876. This catalogue will embrace, in several volumes, the entire contents of the Library up to its date, arranged in the alphabetical order of authors' names, with brief titles, to which the collation will be appended. This general catalogue, which will bring for the first time into print for ready reference the titles of a collection now numbering almost 300,000 volumes, will be much sought for by public institutions and by the collectors of private libraries. The annual catalogues, six of which have been issued in volumes of considerable size, with titles of the books given at large, (but excluding pamphlets,) were discontinued with the issue of 1872. The great cost of these annual volumes was found to be quite out of proportion to their utility, and the undersigned has thought best to substitute for them the publication of occasional brief finding-lists or catalogues of the more important fresh additions to the Library. Such a catalogue, embracing the principal accessions and new books of the past three years, with an index by subjects and titles attached, is now passing through the press, and will soon be distributed to members of Congress.

The publication of the large and valuable selection of original French documents relating to the discoveries and explorations made in the northwestern portion of the United States and on the Mississippi, under the auspices of the French government, from 1614 to 1752, was authorized by act of Congress of March 3, 1873, under the direction of the Joint

Committee on the Library. After some delays, the printing of these documents was commenced a few months since under the superintendence of Mr. Pierre Margry, a highly competent historical writer and *archiviste* of the department of the navy at Paris. The collection will form six octavo volumes, of about 600 pages each, and will embrace a great mass of hitherto unpublished papers, comprising letters and journals of early missionaries and other explorers, the first three volumes being devoted to the discoveries of Cavalier de la Salle and his companions. These documents, the first volume of which is nearly ready, will throw new light upon the settlement and early history of a most important portion of our country, exhibiting as they will the history of the early French colonial enterprises which, ephemeral as they were in many quarters, have stamped so large a portion of the republic with French names, which have remained indelible to tell the story of early colonization.

Among the richer collections embraced in the Library of Congress may be reckoned its materials of American manuscripts, chiefly consisting of military and historical papers. Many of these are of greatest value, composed as they are of autograph letters, journals, and documents of our statesmen and generals of the revolutionary period. Besides these there are the yet unprinted materials gathered for the American archives of the late Peter Force, of Washington, which have never yet been bound or even arranged so as to render them accessible to the student of our history. It is very important that every manuscript or written paper in the Library, which can throw any light on any portion of American history, should be systematically arranged and indexed. The increasing attention that is paid to these memorials of the past, and the new uses that are found for old documents, with the growth of the historical spirit in this country, give force to the suggestion now made to the committee, that a competent historical scholar should be employed to put all these loose materials for history in order, and to prepare a thorough index to their contents, under the direction of the Librarian. The present Library force, very small for so extensive a collection, and for a copyright business as multifarious as that of a bureau, is too fully absorbed in needful clerical and catalogue labors to render it possible to treat this mass of fugitive manuscripts with the requisite time and care. While the undersigned is sensible that an increase of permanent assistants might be reluctantly granted by Congress in the present state of the public finances, he is confident that an allowance for temporary help could not be more wisely bestowed than in arranging for use these manuscript stores and in completing a full index to them, as well as to the debates and documents of Congress.

This is the fourth year in which the necessity for providing additional room for the rapidly growing stores of this Library has been urged upon the attention of Congress. During that time about 60,000 volumes have been added to the collection. The two wings which were built in

1866, and which absorb all the space within the Capitol which could be annexed to the Library, have been more than filled. The temporary expedients of placing books in double rows upon shelves, and of introducing hundreds of wooden cases of shelving to contain the overflow of the alcoves, have been exhausted, and books are now, from sheer force of necessity, being piled upon the floors in all directions. Although it is still possible to produce books at call from any part of the large and embarrassingly crowded collection, it must be manifest to all that the difficulties of administration, and the prompt supply of the wants of Congress and the public who use the Library, are daily increasing. Nor is the embarrassment confined only to the books which form the more important part of the large collections gathered in the Capitol. There is, besides, accumulated through the accessions of years, an immense mass of charts and maps in unbound form, of very great value, all of which are piled up unused, and incapable of service, because there is not a room or a part of a room anywhere for their arrangement and utilization. The official researches of gentlemen connected with the exploring and scientific expeditions of the Government, to whom these maps might be of essential service, are hindered by nearly insuperable obstacles from rendering this great mass of material subservient to the perfection of their important and valuable reports.

Not only the maps and charts, but the vast collection of engravings, lithographs, photographs, chronos, and other objects of art, accumulated for years under the provisions of the law of copyright, are duly numbered, stamped, and stored away in inaccessible and constantly accumulating piles, from the want of any space whatever in which to arrange or to exhibit them.

Congress provided some years since, at the instance of the Committee on the Library, an appropriation by which two of the principal newspapers of each State in the Union, representing different politics, are taken and bound up for preservation as a part of the history of the times. This important accession to the periodical stores of the Library is rendered comparatively useless, so far as the current files are concerned, because there is no possible space in which the newspapers can be daily filed for the use and reference of Congress. Though carefully preserved and promptly bound for preservation, there is no longer the possibility even of shelving half the issues of these representative journals, so important in our current history and politics; and the time will soon come when the legislator in search of a fact, a date, a political article, or a table of statistics known to be in a certain newspaper at a certain date, will find it only at the bottom of a lofty pile of journals, all of which must be displaced before it can be reached. Besides the issues of the daily press, the periodicals which are taken under the copyright law or by subscription, embracing most of the monthly and quarterly magazines and reviews, accumulate with such rapidity that no device yet invented will long avail to produce them when wanted.

Three methods of relief from the embarrassments of this overcrowded Library have been proposed. It has been suggested that the collection might be largely reduced by the sale or alienation of duplicate volumes, and by restricting the Library to certain classes of books selected by some authority from the rapidly-encroaching mass. This proposition overlooks the fact that the Library of Congress has, through the legislation of Congress, become national in its character, and by the legal requirements of the copyright law is becoming a complete repository of the whole product of the American press, for which exclusive rights are secured to authors or publishers. Such a library is not for one generation alone, but its value is developed in handing down to successive generations the approximately complete representation of the nation's literature.

The American people should rely with confidence upon finding in one great and monumental library, and that belonging to the Government, every book which their country has produced. To reduce or cripple such a collection, so well begun, and now in the full tide of a successful and inexpensive accumulation of those literary stores which can be secured in no other way, and which, once lost, could never be reassembled, could not but be looked upon as a narrow and unwise policy, unworthy of a nation claiming to hold a front rank in civilization.

A second suggestion has been made, that large portions of the Library might be colonized or stored in other buildings, while those found to be most constantly used might be retained in the Library. But experience shows that no one can foresee when the books least frequently used may be wanted for an immediate emergency. The segregation of large portions of the collection into a building or buildings necessarily remote would be an almost intolerable inconvenience; nor has the Government at present any fire-proof building whatever where such storage could take place. And this leads to the statement of the third remedy for the existing and rapidly growing accumulation, which will soon become, unless remedied, an almost insurmountable obstruction to the utility of the Library. This remedy is, in short, the erection, at such place as the judgment of Congress may sanction, of an adequate and permanent Library-building, constructed of fire proof materials, and planned throughout with a view to the accommodation of the Library and the copyright department for at least a century to come. The reservation within the Capitol of a library, not only of reference, but of jurisprudence, and of all the leading English writers, so that Congress would have under its own roof the constant facility for supplying those necessities for daily reference which arise during the session, would be entirely compatible with this plan. The duplicates of all important books would permit such retention without weakening the main collection.

The undersigned will not renew suggestions, fully discussed in his former reports, regarding the locality of such a building, or the feasibility of so expanding the present Capitol edifice as to admit of doub-

ling or quadrupling the Library accommodation. While former Committees upon the Library have substantially agreed upon the immediate necessity for a separate building, questions of locality and other matters not needful to be here referred to have prevented the adoption by Congress of any plan of relief whatever. That this postponement can go on no longer without serious injury and deterioration to the books themselves, as well as the most embarrassing difficulties in making them useful to Congress and to the public, the undersigned now earnestly presses upon the attention of the committee.

Congress appropriated at its last session a sum exceeding half a million dollars (\$505,000) to secure a creditable representation of the various departments of the Government at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia. While this large sum was thus devoted to a temporary purpose, (though closely connected with the development of the country,) it cannot fail to excite the regret, not only of scholars and men of letters, but of all the people who are jealous of our national good name, that year after year goes by without any provision for housing or shelving the overflowing stores of a great national library, which represents the growth of a country's literature.

The steady and immense growth of the copyright department alone will soon require a space which can only be provided for by a separate building. No possible enlargement of the Capitol which is likely to be agreed upon could accommodate the existing Library and its normal growth (without any extraordinary purchases or accessions) for more than a very brief period. Besides this, the history of the growth of every great library, and especially of national ones, proves that such a collection cannot long be accommodated within walls devoted for the greater part to other purposes. The 300,000 volumes now forming the Library of Congress are bestowed in three halls and one detached room for the law department. All the Library rooms cover a space of only 11,600 square feet. Comparing this with the principal government libraries abroad, we find that the library of the British Museum covers a space of 110,000 square feet for books alone, besides nearly half as much more for its other collections. The National Library at Paris fills a space of 70,200 square feet. Every European nation has a separate building for its government library, although in none of them is there the same necessity for space that exists in ours, to furnish in addition to the library an office of public record for the copyright business of the whole country. While it may be said that the United States, compared with these nations, is yet young in years, we are already rich in our national literature, and in the accumulations gathered from the best of that of other lands. Congress has deliberately founded by its legislation this great repository of a nation's literature and art; and now that it has grown to a magnitude which will favorably compare with some, at least, of the most useful libraries of the world, it is impossible to believe that the legislature of a great and intelligent people will con-

tinue to neglect making some suitable provision to preserve and extend this noble collection. If left in its present condition, the neglect of Congress will soon place its Librarian in the unhappy predicament of presiding over the greatest chaos in America; but if permanently provided for, with a liberal foresight for the future, this Library will become not only one of the foremost ornaments of the national capital, but a perpetual honor to the United States.

A. R. SPOFFORD,
Librarian of Congress.

Hon. T. O. HOWE,
Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library.