

The North Carolina State Library as a Cultural Resource, 1812–1914

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This year, 2012, marks the two hundredth anniversary of the North Carolina State Library. Originating in 1812 as a small legal collection for use by government officials, the library evolved during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into the state's most important publicly funded cultural resource. Like many state libraries in the United States, North Carolina's official library often suffered because of poor facilities, inadequately prepared state librarians, and a lack of funding. Through the leadership of outstanding legislators and trustees, however, the state's "public library," as it was sometimes called, acquired an important collection of books, pamphlets, and published documents that served not only the needs of legislators and officeholders, but also those of state historians and citizens. The library made a deliberate effort also to collect and preserve state newspapers and other North Caroliniana. Moreover, between 1881 and 1914, the Trustees of the Public Libraries of North Carolina, who oversaw the State Library, sponsored the publication of several documentary works of lasting value. A progressive spirit in the early twentieth century gave rise to public libraries, the State Literary and Historical Association, the North Carolina Library Commission, the North Carolina Historical Commission, and— notably—the rapid growth of the library of the University of North Carolina. As these institutions flourished, the State Library's importance as a publicly funded institution gradually declined, but it continued to provide important services to the people of North Carolina.¹

The development of the North Carolina State Library reflected national trends. Although three states—Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia—maintained small governmental libraries during the colonial period, formal establishment of state libraries in most states did not occur until the early nineteenth century. The movement grew out of the states' desires to build working collections of laws

1. Portions of this essay include information addressed in the author's previous articles concerning the State Library: Maurice C. York, "Alexandre Vattemare's System of International Exchanges in North Carolina," *North Carolina Libraries* 56 (Spring 1998): 11–15; Maurice C. York, "Born Again: Rebuilding the North Carolina State Library, 1834–1847," *North Carolina Libraries* 50 (Spring 1992): 31–34; and Maurice C. York, "The Publications Sponsored by the Trustees of the Public Libraries of North Carolina," *North Carolina Libraries* 36 (Winter 1979): 11–16.

and legislative journals for use by legislators and members of the executive and judicial branches. The growth of such libraries was stimulated by exchanges of published documents with other states and with the federal government. Legislators in Massachusetts approved a resolution in 1811 directing the secretary of state to correspond with officials in other states for the purpose of exchanging published statutes. Two years later, Congress authorized the distribution of a copy of all statutes, journals, and other published documents to each state.² Within the next twenty years, a number of states, including Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia, formally organized state libraries, primarily to accommodate these gifts, although in some cases other books were acquired. Secretaries of state usually assumed the additional responsibility of managing these collections for the sole use of state officials. Not surprisingly, they often developed in an unsystematic fashion.³

The North Carolina General Assembly was in the forefront of these developments. A law enacted in 1812 directed Secretary of State William Hill to assemble all laws and journals of North Carolina and to collect all of the books and documents received from other states as well as the acts and journals of Congress. The secretary was required to bind them as necessary, to prepare a catalog of the publications, and to house them in a bookcase in his office. Legislators gave him the authority to develop rules for use of the collection by members of the General Assembly, department heads, and judges of the North Carolina Supreme Court.⁴ Hill quickly complied. He located state session laws, revised statutes, and legislative journals dating to 1715; congressional documents; and laws of eleven states, among other publications.⁵

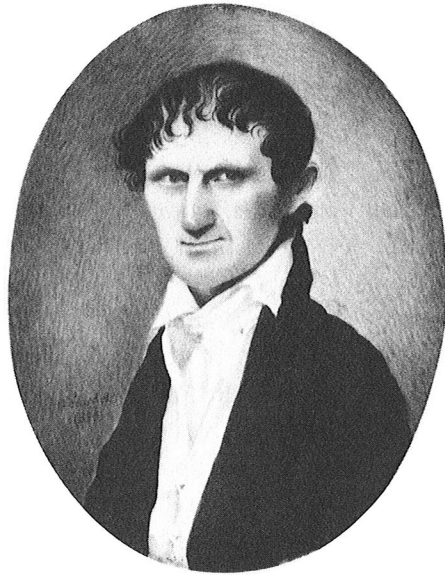
Secretary Hill was guided in his work by the General Assembly's library committees. Probably at the instigation of Archibald DeBow Murphey, a visionary proponent of internal improvements and public education who served as chairman of the Senate's library committee, the General Assembly in 1816 and 1817 set forth rules for management of the State Library by the secretary of state

2. Wayne A. Wiegand, "The Historical Development of State Library Agencies," in *State Library Services and Issues: Facing Future Challenges*, ed. Charles R. McClure (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1986), 1-2; A. J. Conant, "The Evolution of the State Library," *Bulletin of the American Library Association* 20 (September 1926): 330-333; Henry A. Homes, "State and Territorial Libraries," in *Public Libraries in the United States of America: Their History, Condition and Management, a Special Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1876), 1:292.

3. Wiegand, "Historical Development of State Library Agencies," 1-4; Homes, "State and Territorial Libraries," 292-293.

4. *Laws of North Carolina, 1812*, c. 16, s. 1. For a fuller discussion of the origin and development of the State Library, see Maurice C. York, "A History of the North Carolina State Library, 1812-1888" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1978). Hill (1773-1857), a native of Surry (now Stokes) County, served as secretary of state from 1811 until his death, by which time he was known as "Old Sec." *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Hill, William."

5. *North Carolina House Journal, 1813*, 13.



The North Carolina State Library originated in 1812, when the General Assembly passed a law authorizing Secretary of State William Hill to assemble and bind all laws and journals of North Carolina, books and documents received from other states, and the acts and journals of Congress. Hill prepared a catalog of publications and housed the collection in his office. Photograph of portrait miniature of Hill (1825) by Carl Weinedel, courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh.

and, more importantly, appropriated an annual sum of \$250 for the purchase of books by a joint-select committee. Fines collected by the librarian were to augment these funds.⁶ Legislators doubled the annual appropriation in 1821.⁷

The expenditure of these funds transformed the State Library from a collection of public documents into a surprisingly diverse collection. In December 1821, the library committee purchased books from Wallis Eastburn, a bookseller in Raleigh who recently had moved to the United States from England. These included a fourteen-volume set of the work of Henry Fielding, Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, Antonio de Solís's history of the conquest of Mexico, and runs of two journal titles.⁸ Probably because of the extra work involved in acquiring books and making them available for use, the General Assembly of 1826–1827 appointed

6. *North Carolina House Journal*, 1816, 47; *North Carolina Senate Journal*, 1816, 46; *North Carolina House Journal*, 1817, 17; *North Carolina Senate Journal*, 1817, 12, 118–120. Murphey (1777?–1832), a lawyer, judge, legislator, and planter who lived in Hillsborough, worked tirelessly during the early nineteenth century to promote public education, improvements to inland navigation, and the construction of better roads. William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 253–261.

7. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1825–1826*, 90. This resolution affirmed the legitimacy of the action taken in 1821 to increase the appropriation, which apparently had been in question.

8. Eastburn died in New York on November 9, 1823. His books were auctioned in Raleigh the following March. *Raleigh Register, and North-Carolina Gazette*, November 28, 1823, February 27, 1824; "Committee of the State Library," December 27, 1821, Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers, Institutions, State Library, 1821–1896, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Lauriston B. Hardin, William Hill's nephew, as "Librarian to the State Library."⁹ At the request of legislators, Hardin soon prepared a manuscript catalog of the collection and deposited it in the office of the secretary of state. Excluding pamphlets and the *Journals of Congress*, the catalog listed more than 1,200 volumes in twenty categories. The number of works in such areas as agriculture, belles lettres, biography and memoirs, botany, ancient and modern history, mineralogy, philosophy, politics, speeches and debates, and voyages and travels far exceeded those of a strictly legal nature.¹⁰ Among the holdings was a copy of the 1718 edition of John Lawson's *History of Carolina*, for which the library committee had paid \$65 at the auction of the estate of Robert Williams, a former secretary of the University of North Carolina's board of trustees. The Lawson volume was eagerly sought by private individuals and by a representative of the university, and the bidding was "spirited." Historian Jared Sparks, who visited the State Library in 1826, praised the collection as one of several state libraries worthy of emulation but nevertheless described the purchase as "the rarest instance of *bibliomania*, probably, which has occurred on the western continent."¹¹ The greatly expanded collection now resided in a specially made bookcase in the State House, which had been renovated and enlarged during the early 1820s under the supervision of architect William Nichols.¹²

Thus the fledgling State Library was a significant cultural asset at a time when North Carolina suffered from its justifiable reputation as the "Rip Van Winkle State"—a provincial place that seemingly had little interest in democratic reforms, public works, and the education of its citizens. Although more than twenty private library societies had been incorporated in North Carolina by this time, the only other public book collection of significance, the roughly 2,000 volumes owned by the University of North Carolina, was located in a second-floor lecture room in South Building. At least half of the collection had been purchased

9. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1826–1827*, 87; Lauriston B. Hardin to William Hill, January 8, 1831, William Hill Papers, Private Collections, State Archives.

10. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1826–1827*, 87. The catalog was compiled in the rear pages of the following volume: North Carolina and South Carolina Boundary: Reports of Commissioners, 1805–1815, Secretary of State, S.S. XX, Records of State Boundaries, 8, State Archives.

11. H. G. Jones, *For History's Sake: The Preservation and Publication of North Carolina History, 1663–1903* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 83–84; F. M. Hubbard, "An Address, Delivered before the Historical Society of the University of North Carolina, June 1851," *North Carolina University Magazine* 1 (October 1852): 345–346 (first quotation); "Materials for American History," *North American Review* 23 (October 1826): 288 (second quotation). Sparks (1789–1866) edited the *North American Review* and published a twelve-volume work on the life and writings of George Washington. He served as president of Harvard from 1849 to 1853. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Sparks, Jared."

12. Claim of Giles Johnston, November 13, 1824, Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers, Capital Buildings, Box 3, State Archives; John Sanders to Jesse Glasgow, June 19, 1959, Raleigh-Old Capitol-1794, Miscellaneous Collections, Capitol and Capitol Square, Box 1, State Archives; Jones, *For History's Sake*, 82–83.

by President Joseph Caldwell during a trip to Europe in 1824 and 1825.¹³ Believing that an accurate history of North Carolina might inspire the state's leaders to embrace positive change, Archibald Murphey in the early 1820s began this ambitious research project. In addition to collecting historical manuscripts and soliciting essays from some of the state's prominent Revolutionary War veterans, he gained permission from the General Assembly of 1826–1827 to borrow volumes from the State Library for this purpose. Unfortunately, Murphey never published his history. The titles he removed from the collection were among the approximately 115 books that survived a fire on June 21, 1831, that destroyed the State House and most of its contents.¹⁴

Efforts to replace the library took place during a period characterized by progressive reforms and improvements in educational and cultural opportunities. Significant amendments to the state constitution adopted in 1835 made state government more democratic, although free persons of color were disfranchised. In an energized two-party system, Whigs dominated the state from 1835 until 1850. Their initiatives included a system of common schools; support for institutions to care for blind, deaf, and insane citizens; and transportation improvements, including several railroads. The University of North Carolina grew in size and importance, and it was joined by a number of private colleges. Readers had access to a growing number of newspapers, books, magazines, and pamphlets.¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, that three Whig governors during the 1830s and 1840s administered plans not only to replace the State Library's essential legal sources, but also to develop a well-rounded collection that included two especially important works.

Gov. David Lowry Swain took quick action in response to legislative directives. First, he appointed Joseph Gales, editor of the *Raleigh Register*, as an agent to procure published copies of legislative acts and journals. Gales was successful in locating most of the volumes that had been destroyed.¹⁶ The General

13. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 245–252; Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 166; William R. Burk, "The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library and the Sciences, 1795–1902," *North Carolina Libraries* 67 (Spring/Summer 2009): 2–3.

14. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 254; resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1826–1827*, 88; Charles Holloman, "The Day the Capitol Burned," *We the People*, March 1965, 51–52; Jones, *For History's Sake*, 85; Report of the Committee on the Public Library, January 13, 1832, in Resolution Concerning the Public Library, Senate Resolutions, Session of 1831–1832, General Assembly Session Records, State Archives. Lawson's *History of Carolina* was among the titles destroyed in the fire. Reading of the disaster in a newspaper, former president James Madison presented his copy of the 1714 edition to the State Library, where it remains today. James Madison to Governor Stokes, July 15, 1831, Montford Stokes, Governors Papers, State Archives; resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1832–1833*, 104.

15. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 267–299, 320–324.

16. Jones, *For History's Sake*, 89. Swain (1801–1868) was born in Buncombe County. After attending Newton Academy in Asheville, Swain briefly attended the University of North Carolina before studying law with John Louis Taylor in Raleigh. Returning to Asheville to practice law, Swain during the 1820s was elected to five terms in the North Carolina House of Commons. In December 1832, the General Assembly elected him to the first of three one-year terms as governor. In that role he promoted internal

Assembly of 1833–1834 authorized the state’s Literary Board to purchase books for the State Library. This body, whose members included the governor, chief judge of the Supreme Court, the state treasurer, and speakers of both houses of the legislature, administered the Literary Fund, which had been established in 1825 to promote the development of “common schools.”¹⁷ By 1834, the board had some \$3,500 in unexpended library appropriations available for the purchase of books for the State Library.¹⁸ With consent of the board, Swain entered into negotiations with the estate of Archibald Murphey to acquire a portion of his personal library. Later that year the state purchased approximately 100 volumes from the collection, including periodicals and works of biography and history. Among them was a copy of John Brickell’s *Natural History of North-Carolina*, published in Dublin in 1737.¹⁹ In August 1834, the board authorized Swain to advance the local firm of Turner and Hughes \$500 for additional acquisitions for the “legislative department” of the State Library.²⁰ Inasmuch as Swain wished, before leaving office, to “lay the foundation of a respectable library for the State, and more particularly for the Supreme Court,” Judge William Gaston traveled to New York in 1835 to purchase the nucleus of a new library for the court.²¹

Additional purchases and improvements in the management of the State Library awaited the completion of the new State Capitol. The General Assembly of 1833–1834 had directed the Literary Board to prepare the arsenal building, located on Union Square, for the collection, but this space likely proved to be unsatisfactory.²² The handsome new Capitol, built of local stone, was completed in 1840 on Union Square. The structure included a room for the State Library in the east wing of the third floor. The library featured a substantial number of built-in bookcases, some of which were located in a gallery accessible from a small staircase. Furnishings, however, were not provided until early 1843, when the General Assembly authorized the purchase of a dozen chairs and two tables for the

improvements and came to support the Whig Party. He served as president of the University of North Carolina from 1836 until 1868. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Swain, David Lowry.”

17. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1833–1834*, 197; Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 258.

18. An undated accounting of funds available for purchase of books for the State Library, signed by Public Treasurer W. S. Mhoon (Statement of the Treasurer), is located in Secretary’s Office, Miscellaneous Office Files, State Library, 1834–1915, Office of the Secretary of State, State Archives.

19. Jonathan Worth to Governor Swain, May 12, 1834; Governor Swain to Jonathan Worth, May 29, 1834; Valuation of the following books purchased for the State from V. M. Murphey by Henry D. Turner of the Firm of Turner and Hughes, September 10, 1834; Victor M. Murphey to Governor Swain, August 25, 1834; Victor M. Murphey to W. R. Hill, September 20, 1834, David L. Swain, Governors Papers, State Archives.

20. Charles L. Coon, *The Beginnings of Public Education in North Carolina: A Documentary History, 1790–1840*, 2 vols. (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1908), 2:721; Comptroller’s Report, 1834–1835, 21, Accounts, Comptroller’s Statements, 1815–1844, Treasurer’s and Comptroller’s Papers, State Archives.

21. Coon, *Beginnings of Public Education*, 2:727–729.

22. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1833–1834*, 197; Jones, *For History’s Sake*, 83, 90.

State Library.²³ Anticipating a heightened role for the library in state government, legislators in 1841 required the governor and judges of the North Carolina Supreme Court to serve as the Trustees of the Public Library and authorized them to select a state librarian. They also appropriated \$1,000 annually for the next two years for the purchase of books. In 1843, a new act established rules for the library. Only the governor, members of the General Assembly, judges and reporter of the Supreme Court, and attorneys arguing cases before the court would be allowed to remove books from the collection. The law authorized the trustees to pay the state librarian a salary not exceeding \$300 per year. In February 1843, the trustees appointed James Fauntleroy Taylor Jr., a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina, as state librarian.²⁴ Two years later, the General Assembly required him to open the library “for the accommodation of the public” every day of the year, Sundays and the Fourth of July excepted, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. and from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M.²⁵

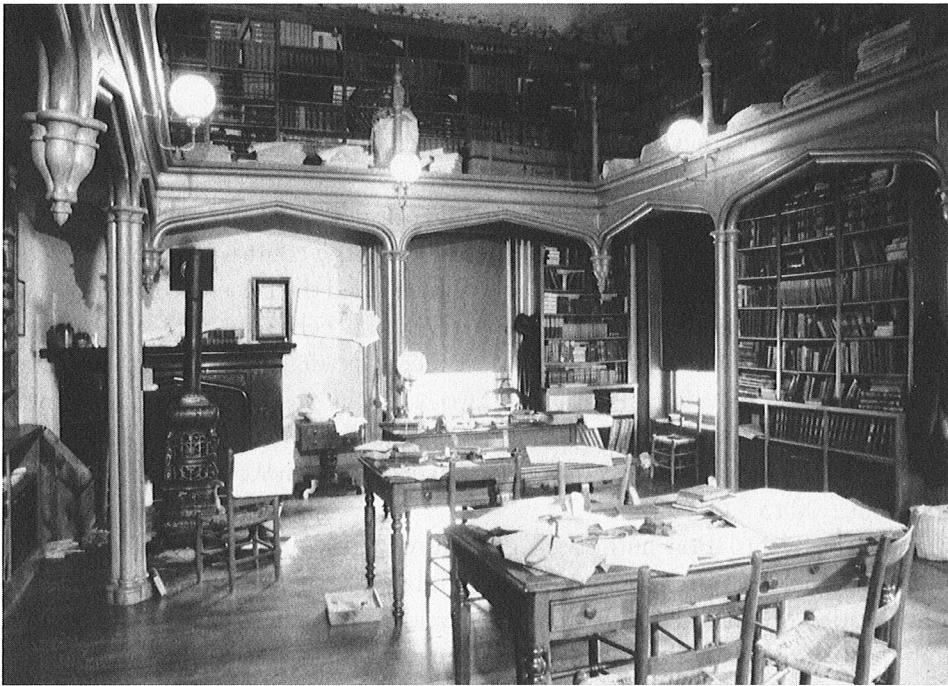
The 1841 legislation authorized the trustees to use unexpended and future annual appropriations to enhance the State Library’s collection. Led by Governors John Motley Morehead and William Alexander Graham, the trustees began an ambitious effort to build an outstanding collection. The trustees secured the services of Joseph Green Cogswell, who had been engaged by John Jacob Astor to help him plan what would become the Astor Library in New York, to purchase books appropriate for a state library.²⁶ Cogswell clearly endeavored to purchase a

23. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 282–283; York, “History of the North Carolina State Library,” 69; *Laws of North Carolina, 1842–1843*, c. 68, s. 3. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the State Capitol Foundation, with substantial private support, assisted the state in restoring the State Capitol, including the State Library room, to its appearance before the Civil War. Terra Steinbeiser, “Foundation Marks 30 Years of Service to the Capitol and Looks toward the Future,” *Anthemion* (Winter 2007): 1, 3.

24. *Laws of North Carolina, 1840–1841*, c. 46; *Laws of North Carolina, 1842–1843*, c. 68; Comptroller’s Report, period ending October 31, 1843, *Public Documents, 1844–1845*, 35. Taylor (1821–1903), the son of Attorney General James F. Taylor, was born in Raleigh. He held the position of state librarian until 1854. York, “History of the North Carolina State Library,” 90.

25. *Laws of North Carolina, 1844–1845*, c. 62.

26. Morehead (1796–1866) was born in Virginia but grew up in Rockingham County, N.C. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1817 and then studied law with Archibald DeBow Murphey. He practiced law in Rockingham County and in the 1820s represented both that county and Guilford County in the North Carolina House of Commons. He represented Guilford County in the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835. Morehead actively promoted internal improvements. He was elected governor in 1840 and in 1842. He later served as president of the North Carolina Railroad. Graham (1804–1875), a native of Lincoln County, was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1824. After studying law with Thomas Ruffin, Graham established a law practice in Hillsborough. Following service in the House of Commons, he represented North Carolina in the U.S. Senate from December 1840 until March 1843. His two terms as governor spanned the years 1845 to 1849. He remained active in state and national politics for the rest of his life. Cogswell (1786–1871), a native of Massachusetts, was graduated from Harvard College in 1806. He studied law but practiced only briefly. He served as librarian at Harvard between 1820 and 1823. Cogswell taught at Harvard and at other schools, including, between 1834 and 1836, a school for boys in Raleigh. After years of advising Astor, he became librarian of the Astor Library in 1848 and remained at the library until 1861. His work



The new State Capitol, completed in 1840, included a room for the State Library in the east wing of the third floor. The room featured a staircase, gallery, built-in bookcases, a dozen chairs, and two tables. The library quickly outgrew its quarters by 1859, and in 1888, the collection was moved to the new Supreme Court and Library Building. The room's appearance in 1856–1857 has been re-created based on records from the North Carolina State Archives. Photograph courtesy of the North Carolina State Capitol, Raleigh.

collection of broad scope, but did so with an eye toward strict economy. By December 1841, he had compiled a systematic catalog for use in making purchases. Primarily during 1842, but continuing until 1847, Cogswell visited such firms as Alexander V. Blake in New York, Little and Brown in Boston, and Wiley and Putnam in London, selecting more than 1,600 volumes at a cost of between \$3,500 and \$4,000. Reference tools included atlases, English and American encyclopedias, and foreign language dictionaries. Officials in Raleigh received crates of books containing works of philosophy, biography, history, geography, law and political science, and the fine arts. Accounts of voyages and travels, classical and modern literature and poetry, books about agriculture, and such scientific topics as astronomy, chemistry, geology, ornithology, and physics were represented. Library patrons would soon be able to learn about the ideas and lives of leaders of the American Revolution and early republic. Not surprisingly,

in developing this collection earned him recognition as one of the country's leading librarians. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Morehead, John Motley" and "Graham, William Alexander"; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Cogswell, Joseph Green"; George Burwell Utley, *The Librarians' Conference of 1853: A Chapter in American Library History* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1951), 23, 26, 31, 36, 46, 69.

many of the titles were by or about British essayists, historians, novelists, poets, and statesmen, but Cogswell also chose books related to other sections of Europe, as well as to such exotic places as Africa, Asia, the Arctic, the Middle East, and South America.²⁷

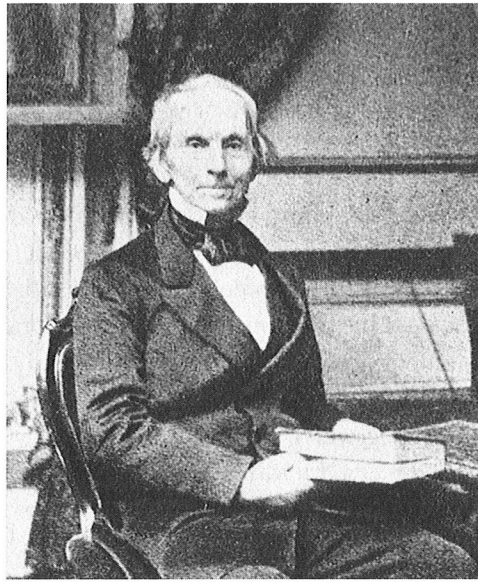
The state's energetic agent worked diligently to acquire two valuable sets. Under the guidance of Governor Graham, Cogswell searched for a copy of the first edition of John James Audubon's *Birds of America*, a collection of 435 immense, hand-colored engravings published between 1827 and 1838. In an effort to obtain the set at the best price possible, he contacted six of the original subscribers and enlisted the help of Audubon himself. He located a copy in the spring of 1846 for \$650, an amount far less than the original price of approximately \$1,000. In return for Audubon's assistance, Cogswell committed the library to purchase the artist's edition of the *Viviparous Quadrupeds*, then in production.²⁸ Subsequently, Cogswell acquired *Description de l'Égypte*, an important work containing some twenty-three volumes of text and engraved illustrations, which had been published by the French Commission des Sciences et Arts d'Égypte between 1809 and 1828. After several unsuccessful attempts, he bought the work in December 1847 at an auction in New York.²⁹

These concerted efforts to replenish the State Library's collection and to house it in the new Capitol took place in the midst of library development elsewhere in the state and nation that reflected varying levels of commitment. By the late 1840s, the State Library's collection of approximately 3,000 volumes compared favorably to the library of the University of North Carolina. The university's collection of 3,500 volumes had been static for some time because the shelves in the room that held it were full, and the books were rarely used. On the other hand, the libraries of the Dialectic Society and the Philanthropic Society at the university each held more books than the university's library and were heavily

27. Cogswell to Governor Morehead, December 10, 1841, March 15, 28, June 22, [August 14], November 14, 1842, November 20, 1844, John M. Morehead, Governors Papers, State Archives; invoices for books purchased by Cogswell for the State Library, 1842–1844, State Library of North Carolina: Books Ordered for Library, 1842–1844, Secretary's Office, Miscellaneous Office Files, State Library, 1834–1915, Office of the Secretary of State, State Archives; Cogswell to Governor Graham, December 23, 1847, William A. Graham, Governors Papers (hereinafter cited as Graham Papers), State Archives.

28. Cogswell to Governor Graham, January 19, April 4, 1846, Graham Papers; Governor Graham to Cogswell, January 29, April 10, 1846, William A. Graham, Governors Letter Books (hereinafter cited as Graham Letter Books), State Archives; Richard Rhodes, *John James Audubon: The Making of an American* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 290–404. More than a century after it was purchased, the State Library's copy of *Birds of America* was transferred to the North Carolina Museum of Art, which later restored the plates and now exhibits them.

29. Cogswell to Governor Graham, January 19, April 4, 1846, December 23, 1847, Graham Papers; Cogswell to Graham, December 21, 1846, Graham Letter Books; Graham to Cogswell, April 20, 1847, Graham Letter Books. This set was later transferred to the library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where it remains.



In an effort to expand the library's holdings, Trustees of the Public Library enlisted Joseph Green Cogswell, a Massachusetts educator, to purchase books appropriate to a state library collection. Cogswell was instrumental in securing a first edition of John James Audubon's *Birds of America* for the North Carolina State Library. Portrait of Cogswell from frontispiece to Anna Eliot Ticknor, ed., *Life of Joseph Green Cogswell as Sketched in His Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1874).

used by students.³⁰ Nationally, state library collections, most of which were maintained in the capitols or state houses, ranged in size from 1,000 volumes in Texas to more than 34,000 in New York. Virginia's collection contained 14,000 volumes, and Mississippi's amounted to 5,000. The accessibility and quality of state libraries depended on the generosity of legislators and the initiative of public officials. Most of them were open to the public for consultation but generally allowed only public officials and attorneys practicing in the courts to remove books. In Iowa, the library grew only through the exchange of documents with other states and from donations by the United States Congress. In Louisiana, however, the legislature appropriated \$1,000 annually for acquisitions. In addition to books, the collection included manuscripts, maps, and engravings, and was open to the public daily from 10:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. Some states, like Delaware, Kentucky, and Maryland, hired state librarians to manage their collections, while others, including Connecticut, Florida, and Illinois, continued

30. Charles C. Jewett, *Appendix to the Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Containing a Report on the Public Libraries of the United States of America, January 1, 1850*, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1849–1850, Misc. S. Doc. 120, 148–149 (hereafter cited as *Report on the Public Libraries*). For discussions of the development of the libraries of the University of North Carolina during the antebellum period, see Maurice C. York, "The Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies' Contributions to the Library of the University of North Carolina, 1886–1906," *North Carolina Historical Review* 59 (October 1982): 327–334; and Burk, "University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library," 2–5.

to require the secretary of state to oversee them. By this time, a number of states had published catalogs of their state library collections.³¹

Many states, including North Carolina, also participated in a unique cooperative venture. In 1849, the General Assembly voted to become involved in an international exchange program operated by Nicolas Marie Alexandre Vattemare, a French ventriloquist, impersonator, and philanthropist. During his travels throughout Europe to perform, Vattemare visited libraries and museums. Noticing that many of the collections were duplicative in nature, he sought to encourage institutions to exchange books, documents, works of art, and artifacts. During a nineteen-month performing tour of the United States that began in 1839, Vattemare persuaded the United States Congress and such states as Louisiana and New York to participate in his program.³² After formally establishing an agency in Paris to facilitate the exchange program, Vattemare returned to the United States in 1847 with a large collection of books, prints, and medals, which he hoped would attract further support.³³ His tour of the country included a stop in Raleigh, where on the evening of January 9, 1849, he addressed a joint session of the General Assembly. Vattemare extolled state libraries, despite their emphasis on legal and political works collected chiefly for the use of public officials, as the most appropriate institutions for fostering the cultural development he envisioned: "This would be a true intellectual democracy—the best books, selected to suit the wants of all classes and professions, *freely thrown open to the use of all.*"³⁴ The Frenchman brought the State Library a collection of more than fifty books, pamphlets, and periodicals, as well as an engraving of "Sir Walter Raleigh spreading his Cloak at the feet of Queen Elizabeth."³⁵ The General Assembly soon reciprocated by authorizing the governor to contribute to Vattemare's program multiple copies of state histories, scientific reports, and public documents, among other publications. In turn, Gov. Charles Manly instructed State Librarian James F. Taylor to procure the books and documents. Legislators

31. "Magnitude of the Educational Interest of the United States," *American Journal of Education* 1 (March 1856): 369; Jewett, *Report on the Public Libraries*, 6, 11, 24–26, 67, 131–132, 160–162, 166, 178–179, 185–186.

32. Vattemare (1796–1864) was born in Paris but grew up on his father's small estate in Normandy. Although he pursued seminary and medical studies, he ultimately chose to pursue a career as an entertainer. *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Vattemare, Nicolas Marie Alexandre"; *Dictionary of American Library Biography*, s.v. "Vattemare, Nicolas-Marie-Alexandre"; Elizabeth M. Richards, "Alexandre Vattemare and His System of International Exchanges," *Medical Library Association Bulletin* 32 (October 1944): 414–422; Utley, *Librarians' Conference*, 174.

33. *Dictionary of American Library Biography*, s.v. "Vattemare, Nicolas-Marie-Alexandre"; Richards, "Alexandre Vattemare," 426–428.

34. *Proceedings of the General Assembly of North Carolina on the Subject of International Exchanges, Session 1848–49* (Raleigh, N.C.: Seaton Gales, Printer for the State, 1849), 64 (quotation); *Raleigh Register*, January 10, 1849; *Weekly Raleigh Register, and North Carolina Gazette*, January 17, 1849.

35. *Proceedings of the General Assembly*, [115]–118. Most of the publications had been published in France during the 1840s and pertained to various aspects of agriculture.

appropriated \$300 annually for support of the exchange agency in Paris.³⁶ Vattemare subsequently contributed additional works, many in French and Latin, to the State Library, but they likely were of little practical value. Like its counterparts in other states, the North Carolina General Assembly quickly lost interest in the program, and in January 1851, repealed the legislation passed just two years earlier.³⁷

By the 1850s, the library's holdings were significant enough to support several noteworthy research projects. In January 1851, the General Assembly authorized John Hill Wheeler to borrow books from the collection for use in preparing his history of North Carolina.³⁸ Two years later, legislators authorized Samuel Pearce, Calvin Henderson Wiley, and William Dewey Cooke to use books, maps, charts, and documents in the library for the compilation of an accurate map of the state. This effort came to fruition in 1857 with the publication of *Cooke's New Map of the State of North Carolina*.³⁹ Francis Lister Hawks gained legislative approval in 1856 to use the library for another history of North Carolina. This two-volume work was published in 1857 and 1858 by E. J. Hale and Son of Fayetteville.⁴⁰

Librarian O. H. Perry improved the State Library during a fourteen-year tenure that began in 1854.⁴¹ He reported to legislators in 1860 that, in response to a directive from the trustees, he had asked Joseph Green Cogswell to give him "a list

36. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1848–1849*, 230–231; *Laws of North Carolina, 1848–1849*, c. 63; Charles Manly to James F. Taylor, January 26, 1849, Charles Manly, Governors Letter Books, State Archives.

37. O. H. Perry, *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the North Carolina State Library, Prepared by O. H. Perry, Librarian* (Raleigh, N.C.: Nichols, Gorman and Neathery, Book and Job Printers, 1866), 76–79; *Laws of North Carolina, 1850–1851*, c. 61; Richards, "Alexandre Vattemare," 432–435, 441–443, 446. Only a few of the books received through Vattemare's exchange program remain in the State Library's collection today.

38. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1850–1851*, 826; John H. Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina, from 1584 to 1851* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1851). Wheeler (1806–1882) was born in Murfreesboro. He earned a bachelor's degree from Columbian College and obtained a master's degree from the University of North Carolina. At various times he served in the North Carolina House of Commons, as superintendent of the Charlotte branch of the U.S. Mint, and as state treasurer. Beginning in 1854, he briefly represented the United States as minister to Nicaragua. He spent much of his later life pursuing his interest in North Carolina history. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Wheeler, John Hill."

39. Resolution in *Laws of North Carolina, 1852*, 639; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Cooke, William Dewey." Wiley discontinued his association with this project in 1854 to devote himself to the development of common schools.

40. Resolution in *Public Laws of North Carolina, 1856–1857*, 73.

41. Perry (d. 1885) held the position of state librarian from 1854 until 1868. In 1860, he published a reprint of John Lawson's *History of Carolina* (1714). He served as an agent for the North Carolina State Life Insurance Company. A Baptist, he wrote numerous articles for the *Raleigh Biblical Recorder*, which also published his book *Truth Vindicated, with Reference to the Book of Job* (1875). *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Perry, Oliver Hazard." An obituary in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 4, 1885, gives Perry's name as Oliver H., and a death notice in the *Farmer and Mechanic* (Raleigh), January 7, 1885, lists his name as Oliver Hazard. According to records of the Oakwood Cemetery, however, his name was Oleven H. Oakwood Cemetery Record of Interments, 1866–1974, Miscellaneous Collections, Cemetery (microfilm, State Archives).



During his second trip to the United States, which began in 1847, Nicolas Marie Alexandre Vattemare, a French ventriloquist and philanthropist, sought to establish a cultural program in which institutions would exchange books, documents, works of art, and artifacts. Vattemare contributed numerous works to the State Library during the two years in which it participated in the exchange program. Undated pencil drawing of Vattemare by William Walcutt, in the Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, New York Public Library.

of standard works suitable for a State Library.” He was able to procure many of them in New York, at a cost of more than \$1,200. He continued the practice of acquiring and binding important state newspapers. A visitor to the library in 1860 informed the *Fayetteville Observer* that “We found a very fine room, with probably several thousand volumes of valuable books, many of them superbly (not gaudily) bound, and the whole, as well as the apartment itself, kept in the very neatest condition.” The reporter commented on the carefully preserved volumes of newspapers, “out of which materials for History may hereafter be collated.” Perry appeared to be very familiar with the collection.⁴² Although he clearly was not a trained bibliographer, Perry did know the books entrusted to his care. Like many of his colleagues in state libraries throughout the United States, he prepared printed catalogs of the State Library’s holdings. One appeared in the public documents of 1854–1855. He published a more elaborate catalog, which provided the case and shelf location of each title, in 1866—this after having protected the library “from the arrival of General Sherman’s army until the appointment of

42. Report of the State Librarian, 1860, Document 42, *Public Documents, 1860–1861*, 1–2; Comptroller’s Statement, 1860, *Public Laws of North Carolina, 1860–1861*, 241; *Fayetteville Observer*, November 29, 1860 (quotation).

Provisional Governor [William Woods Holden].” A Union officer who consulted the collection characterized it as “small and of modern selection.”⁴³

The two decades following the Civil War were a time of transition and instability for the State Library, but some of the librarians and trustees used their authority to enhance the library’s services. In 1871, the General Assembly enacted legislation requiring the biennial election by that body of the state librarian, at a salary not to exceed \$500. The following year, legislators changed the composition of the trustees to include the governor, the secretary of state, and the superintendent of public instruction. In practice, the trustees nominated librarians for consideration by the General Assembly. The 1871 legislation thus politicized the position of state librarian and led to more frequent turnover than had been the case previously. Whereas two men managed the library between 1843 and 1868, five held the position of state librarian during the period 1871–1893. Some of the incumbents may have gained the librarian’s post as a political reward, as was often the case in other states.⁴⁴ Sherwood Haywood, for example, helped to organize the Tilden-Vance Club of Raleigh and served as its vice president during the political campaign of 1876. The library trustees then nominated him for the position of state librarian, and he was confirmed by the General Assembly early in 1877. Cornelia Phillips Spencer of Chapel Hill soon scolded Gov. Zebulon Baird Vance for this action: “The Librarians of the Northern public Libraries remain in office many years, as they ought—& learn their business thoroughly. . . . It is a shame that the office of State Librarian should depend on a party vote every year or two. He ought to be a fixture, & a bookworm besides.”⁴⁵

43. In addition to the holdings of the State Library, the 1866 catalog included listings for the libraries of the House of Commons, Senate, and Supreme Court. Jim Ranz, *The Printed Book Catalogue in American Libraries: 1723–1900*, ACRL Monograph 28 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1964), 42; Catalogue of Books Belonging to the North Carolina State Library, *Public Documents, 1854–1855*; Perry, *Catalogue of Books*; Resolution in *Public Laws of North Carolina, 1866–1867*, 227 (first quotation); George Ward Nichols, *The Story of the Great March: From the Diary of a Staff Officer* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1866), 297 (second quotation).

44. *Public Laws of North Carolina, 1870–1871*, c. 70; *Public Laws of North Carolina, 1871–1872*, c. 169; York, “History of the North Carolina State Library,” 14, 92–100; Wiegand, “Historical Development of State Library Agencies,” 4–5. The law enacted during the 1871–1872 session also removed the Law Library of some 6,000 volumes from the custody of the State Library.

45. Haywood (1853–1923) was born in Raleigh. He studied law at Columbia University and with Richard Henry Battle of Raleigh. He served as state librarian from 1877 until 1885 and later practiced as an attorney. York, “History of the North Carolina State Library,” 96; Cornelia Phillips Spencer to Governor Vance, July 23, 1877, Zebulon Baird Vance, Governors Papers, State Archives (hereinafter cited as Vance Papers, State Archives). Spencer (1825–1908), the daughter of James and Judith Phillips, was born in New York but moved with her family to Chapel Hill in 1826, where her father taught mathematics. She received no formal education but read widely. Cornelia married James Munroe Spencer in 1855 and moved with him to Alabama, but returned to Chapel Hill in the early 1860s, following his death. An avid writer, she published articles in several publications, penned two books, and edited the *Chapel Hill Ledger*. She is known primarily for her tireless efforts to reopen the University of North Carolina, which had closed after the Civil War. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Spencer, Cornelia Phillips.” Vance (1830–1894), a native of Buncombe County, studied briefly at the University of North Carolina beginning in 1851, and in 1852 became solicitor of Buncombe County.

Like some of his predecessors before the war, Governor Vance took a strong interest in the State Library. Soon after assuming office in 1877, he asked State Librarian Sherwood Haywood to prepare a catalog of the library, which he described as “plundered, abused & neglected,” so that \$1,500 in unexpended appropriations could be used to address deficiencies in the collection. Not surprisingly, Haywood’s catalog was, according to Vance, “all—every way—alphabetical without a particle of system.”⁴⁶ Vance called on Cornelia Phillips Spencer to prepare a classified catalog that could serve his purpose. She examined “piles” of published catalogs, including those representing the libraries of Yale College and the Library of Congress. She corresponded with a number of librarians, including Charles Ammi Cutter of the Boston Athenaeum, who urged her to spend the time needed to undertake the project properly. Mrs. Spencer reported to Governor Vance in late August of 1877 that the catalog was nearly finished. Its organization into such categories as agriculture, fiction, history, and law revealed which areas needed strengthening.⁴⁷ It probably aided Haywood in reorganizing the collection, for he reported two years later that he had overhauled the library and could now find any book at a moment’s notice.⁴⁸

This improvement was essential to the success of the library. North Carolina had no public libraries, so the State Library increasingly fulfilled this role. During the 1870s and early 1880s, the library circulated books to the public, a practice that resulted in significant losses. More than ten thousand people visited the library in 1878.⁴⁹ Given Haywood’s philosophy of service, which he espoused in his annual report the following year, they probably felt welcome:

He obtained licenses to practice law in the state’s county and superior courts. Aligned with the American (Know-Nothing) Party, Vance served briefly in the North Carolina House of Commons and in the U.S. House of Representatives before the outbreak of the Civil War. He served as governor from 1863 until 1865 and was again elected in 1876. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1878 and continued to represent the state as senator until his death. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Vance, Zebulon Baird.”

46. Governor Vance to Cornelia Phillips Spencer, May 7, 1877, Cornelia Phillips Spencer (1825–1908) Papers, Private Collections, State Archives.

47. Cornelia Phillips Spencer to Governor Vance, July 18, 1877, Cornelia Phillips Spencer to Governor Vance, July 23, 1877, Vance Papers, State Archives; Cornelia Phillips Spencer to Governor Vance, July 9, 18, 1877, Cornelia Phillips Spencer Papers #683, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Cornelia Phillips Spencer to Governor Vance, August 23, 1877, Zebulon Baird Vance Papers #3952, Southern Historical Collection.

48. Report of the State Librarian, Document 11, *Public Documents*, 1879, 3.

49. York, “History of the North Carolina State Library,” 57–58, 62–64; *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, s.v. “Public Libraries”; Report of the State Librarian, Document 11, *Public Documents*, 1873–1874, 3; undated report of Sherwood Haywood to the Trustees of the Public Libraries (ca. 1877), Vance Papers, State Archives; Report of the State Librarian, Document 11, *Public Documents*, 1879, 3.

The time has long passed when knowledge and wisdom were the possession of the favored few, and science, which is delving into every subject, has become popularized. Public Libraries, therefore, are necessities. The minds of all classes are imbued with a desire for improvement, and public opinion demands them.

A State Library should be a lasting monument—a conservatory of knowledge, to which all should be allowed easy access, and it is with a due appreciation of this fact that these statements are made. Its influence for good, if properly fostered, can scarcely be overestimated.⁵⁰

It was in this spirit that the trustees and state librarians assumed the new responsibilities of preserving and publishing primary source material. A law enacted in 1872 gave the trustees authority over not only books and published documents, but also papers and manuscripts belonging to the state. Perhaps in response to this legislation, historian John Hill Wheeler in 1874 informed Samuel A'Court Ashe that he had stipulated in his will that all of his "invaluable" manuscripts and books pertaining to North Carolina history should be deposited in the State Library, and he charged Ashe with insuring that they would be "safely kept and properly used."⁵¹ Unfortunately, however, a portion of the printed material was auctioned in New York in the spring of 1882. In December of that year, following Wheeler's death, the trustees corresponded with his son Woodbury to obtain the manuscripts, but were unsuccessful.⁵² In 1881, at the instigation of Secretary of State William Laurence Saunders, a member of the library board, the General Assembly authorized the trustees to publish and sell documentary volumes containing transcripts of original papers and records dated prior to 1781 that belonged to the state. Two years later, legislators expanded the scope of this work by allowing trustees to obtain and publish all colonial records that "may be missing from the archives of the state." The law also authorized such appropriations as were necessary to complete the work.⁵³ These far-reaching acts resulted in the publication of *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, edited by Saunders, a ten-volume set that included documents dating to 1776, which was completed in 1890. The board instructed the state librarian to publicize and distribute these sets, which sold initially for \$50.⁵⁴

50. Report of the State Librarian, Document 11, *Public Documents*, 1879, 2.

51. John Hill Wheeler to Samuel A'Court Ashe, March 27, 1874, Samuel A'Court Ashe Papers, Private Collections, State Archives. Ashe (1840–1938), a lawyer, newspaper publisher, and amateur historian, is perhaps best known as editor of the *Biographical History of North Carolina*, published between 1905 and 1917 by Charles L. Van Noppen. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Ashe, Samuel A'Court."

52. A portion of Wheeler's manuscripts found their way to the Library of Congress. Others were sold to historian Stephen B. Weeks in 1899. Jones, *For History's Sake*, 179–181; Minutes of the Meetings of the Trustees of the Public Libraries of North Carolina, December 1882, Administrative Division, North Carolina State Library (hereinafter cited as Library Board Minutes), State Archives; *Catalogue of the Library of John H. Wheeler, the Historian of North Carolina*. . . . (New York: Bangs and Co., 1882), copy in the Verona Joyner Langford North Carolina Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.

53. *Laws and Resolutions of North Carolina*, 1881, c. 88; Jones, *For History's Sake*, 215–218.

54. Jones, *For History's Sake*, 225; Library Board Minutes, May 4, 30, 1891. A printed circular (May 1891) signed by State Librarian Miles Osborne Sherrill announced the publication and availability of the set.

After the death of Saunders, the trustees authorized North Carolina Supreme Court justice Walter Clark to continue the project. Between 1893 and 1907, Clark edited the sixteen-volume *State Records of North Carolina*, which contained records created as late as 1790. The trustees subsequently paid historian Stephen Beaugard Weeks \$1,200 to compile a four-volume index to the entire twenty-six volumes, an endeavor that spanned the years 1909 to 1914.⁵⁵ Although the library trustees undertook several other publication projects during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the *Colonial and State Records* project endures as the most ambitious and useful historical publication effort in the state's history.⁵⁶

These publications appeared during a period of significant change for the State Library—the construction of new facilities and gradual improvements in collections and services. By the 1870s, the collection had begun to outgrow its room on the third floor of the Capitol. In his published report to the General Assembly in 1879, Sherwood Haywood stated that many of the more than 16,000 volumes of books, documents, magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets in the collection were scattered in offices and closets throughout the building. Some had been moved to the libraries of the House and Senate.⁵⁷ Six years later, Haywood lamented that “there is *actually no space* left which can in any way be utilized. We now have thousands of valuable books on the floors of the room and gallery and in closets constantly exposed.”⁵⁸ This situation was rectified in March of 1888, when the library moved into the new Supreme Court and Library Building, located on

Miscellaneous Ledger [Petty Cash], Administrative Division, North Carolina State Library, State Archives.

55. Jones, *For History's Sake*, 230–235. Clark (1846–1924) was born in Halifax County. Educated at the University of North Carolina, he was graduated in 1864. After service in the North Carolina Junior Reserves during the final years of the Civil War, Clark studied law in New York and at Columbian Law School. A prominent lawyer in Raleigh, he served as a judge of the superior courts and, beginning in 1889, as an associate justice of the Supreme Court. In 1902, he was elected chief justice. An advocate of many progressive causes, he was re-elected twice. Weeks (1865–1918) was born in Pasquotank County and earned three degrees at the University of North Carolina before studying history under Herbert Baxter Adams at the Johns Hopkins University. After completing his doctorate in history, in 1891 he joined the faculty of Trinity College in Randolph County. He later worked for the Bureau of Education in Washington. The state's first professional historian, Weeks was a prolific writer and bibliographer. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Clark, Walter McKenzie” and “Weeks, Stephen Beaugard.” The library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recently digitized the *Colonial and State Records*, thus making the publication more accessible to users anywhere in the world. For a discussion of the state's efforts to publish its colonial and early state records as well as the digitization of the *Colonial and State Records*, see H. G. Jones and William S. Price, *The Collection and Publication of the Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: North Caroliniana Society, 2010).

56. These were John Wheeler Moore's four-volume *Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States* (1882); *Abstract of North Carolina Wills Compiled from Original and Recorded Wills in the Office of the Secretary of State* (1910) and *North Carolina Wills and Inventories in the Office of the Secretary of State* (1912), both compiled by Secretary of State John Bryan Grimes; and a reprint of John Brickell's 1737 publication, *Natural History of North Carolina* (1911).

57. Report of the State Librarian, Document 11, *Public Documents*, 1879, 2–3.

58. Report of State Librarian, Document 9, *Public Documents*, 1885, 1.

NORTH CAROLINA

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

Raleigh, May 1891

DEAR SIR:—I have the honor to inform you that the Colonial Records of North Carolina, from 1662 to 1776, compiled and edited by Col. William L. Saunders, late Secretary of State, have been published by order of the General Assembly, under supervision of the Trustees of Public Libraries.

This work consists of ten large quarto volumes, cloth binding, averaging 1,143 pages per volume, exclusive of an average of 37 pages per volume of Prefatory Notes.

Complete sets of these invaluable Records are now ready for delivery. Price \$50 per set.

All orders, accompanied with check for the amount, should be addressed to the undersigned.

All orders will be shipped per Express, unless otherwise ordered.

J. C. BIRDSONG, State Librarian.

Attention is called to some of the many testimonials to the great intrinsic value of these Records, constituting the Colonial History of North Carolina.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 31, 1887.

J. C. BIRDSONG, Esq., State Librarian, Raleigh, N. C.:

My DEAR SIR:—The magnificent present of four volumes of the Colonial Records of North Carolina, by the Trustees of the Library of the State, accompany your letter of the 27th instant.

Exposed to them, I pray you, my most hearty thanks for their thoughtful kindness to me. My gratitude is increased by the high value and importance of the volumes themselves and the excellent manner in which, as a cursory examination has convinced me, they have been edited by your accomplished Secretary.

Very gratefully and most sincerely yours,

GEO. BANCROFT.

Augusta, Ga., May 17, 1886.

Hon. W. L. SAUNDERS:

My DEAR COLONEL:—Accept my cordial thanks for the additional advance sheets of the Colonial Records of North Carolina, with which you have kindly complimented me. I am glad to have them. They will prove a valuable contribution to the Colonial history of your State, and I wish you much success in the prosecution of your most valuable labors.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES C. JONES, Jr.

Oxford, N. C., May 12, 1886.

Hon. W. L. SAUNDERS:

My DEAR COLONEL:—Accept my thanks for the advance sheets of the Colonial Records kindly sent me by you. The task you are engaged in is an exceedingly laborious one, and the State is your debtor therefor. With the great familiarity you have with our history, you alone of all men now living are equipped for writing a history of our State as it ought to be done, and I trust yet to see it come your pen.

With the highest esteem and regard,

WALTER CLARK,

Associate Justice Supreme Court.

Chestertown, Md., May 16, 1886.

Hon. W. L. SAUNDERS:

DEAR SIR:—I have received to-day the advance sheets of 200 pages of the Colonial Records of North Carolina, for which please accept my sincere thanks.

I wish that South Carolina could be induced to follow your example, and hope that what you are doing may influence her in that direction. I hope the appearance of this first portion of the Records is an indication of your renewed health.

Truly and respectfully yours,

WM. J. RIVERS.

Richmond, Va., May 30, 1887.

My DEAR SIR:—I am sincerely thankful for the compliment paid me in sending me the highly valuable volumes of the Colonial Records of North Carolina. They are most welcome, and I feel assured will prove very useful to me in my historical studies.

I beg to remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

R. A. BROCK,

Secretary Virginia Historical Society.

CHAPEL HILL, May 10, 1886.

COLONEL SAUNDERS:

DEAR SIR:—Thanks for the Colonial papers received from you. I am very much pleased by your sending them to me. I have cut all the leaves and dipped into the pages here and there. The journals of the early explorers of our coast have always been pleasant reading to me.

I congratulate you on having accomplished so much towards the history of our State; the despatch, so to speak, must be nearly at an end, and I do hope it will not be long now before you set your pen at work. You could not do a greater service for North Carolina, and nobody can do it so well as you.

With high regard, yours,

CORNELIA F. SPENCER.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 23, 1887.

DEAR SIR:—I have yours of the 27th in relation to a copy of the first four volumes of Colonial Records of our State. I beg that you will thank the trustees for this favor done me. I appreciate it warmly, and shall enjoy a perusal of this publication, which is creditable to the liberality of North Carolina, and still more to the energy, intelligence and discrimination of Colonel Saunders. I shall always enjoy our Colonial history more in this shape.

I am very truly yours,

SAMUEL F. PHILLIPS.

RALEIGH, N. C., May 13, 1886.

COLONEL SAUNDERS:

My DEAR SIR:—I beg you to accept my sincere thanks for the installment of Colonial Records which you were so kind as to send me. If you shall continue the favor, I hope by the time the series is completed to be pretty thoroughly acquainted with its contents. No reading could be more interesting to me. Again I thank you heartily.

Very truly yours,

M. McGEHEE,

Commissioner of Agriculture.

VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY.

Richmond, Va., October 21, 1880.

DEAR SIR:—In repeating this request I do not like to seem importunate, and trust that you will not so deem me. But we are very anxious to get the Records, not only for their local interest, but also because they illustrate much of our common history.

Very respectfully,

C. POINDEXTER,

State Librarian.

DAVIDSON COLLEGE, N. C., May 13, 1886.

Hon. W. L. SAUNDERS:

My DEAR SIR:—I received several days ago advance sheets of the Colonial Records. I congratulate you on the success of your labor of love, and congratulate the State on having her documentary history put into such good shape.

Yours very truly,

W. J. MARTIN.

RALEIGH, January, 1910.

Since the foregoing statement made by Mr. Birdsong, the work has been continued under the editorship of Hon. Walter Clark, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, of North Carolina; the size and binding the same as first 10 volumes, and known as State Records; bringing the history up to 1790. Vol. 26 gives a census of the families living in North Carolina in 1790, giving the name of the head of each family.

This is the most important set of books ever published in our State. In addition to the 10 volumes issued in 1891, 16 volumes of the State Records have been published, in all 26 volumes, now ready for sale and distribution. When supply is exhausted it will be too late to secure them. Also a few sets of North Carolina Regimental Histories for sale.

In 1900 the price was reduced from \$5.00 per volume to \$3.00 per volume. Persons desiring this valuable work had better send in their orders at an early day. Cash must accompany all orders.

Send orders to

M. O. SHERRILL,

STATE LIBRARIAN,

RALEIGH, N. C.

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the State Library
 M. O. Sherrill, Librarian

Please Post,

In 1883, the General Assembly authorized the Trustees of the Public Libraries to obtain and publish colonial records pertaining to North Carolina, an act that resulted in publication of *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*. This May 1891 printed circular, signed by State Librarian Miles Sherrill, announced the publication of the ten-volume set. Miscellaneous Ledger [Petty Cash], Administration Division, North Carolina State Library Records, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

the northeast corner of Edenton and Salisbury streets. Here, three large rooms, including a reading room measuring thirty-five by forty feet, accommodated the entire collection and provided some space for future growth.⁵⁹

Despite the meager annual appropriation—still only \$500—State Librarian James Cook Birdsong did much to augment the collection and to assist the public in using it. He actively collected histories of all major religious denominations in the state and increased the number of newspapers received. In his biennial report for the two years ending December 31, 1888, Birdsong noted that the library had acquired nearly 1,500 new books and pamphlets by purchase, gift, or exchange. He requested additional funds for the purchase of modern works in the fields of agriculture, mechanics, and science, to support the students enrolled at the new North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, located a short distance from the library.⁶⁰ Birdsong actively encouraged the gift of portraits of prominent Confederate veterans and decorated the library's walls with them. Because there was no museum of history at the time, he also collected various historical artifacts. In 1893, for example, Birdsong convinced Col. Frederick Augustus Olds to give the library a collection of state and Confederate money as well as early state records for display in the library. The *Raleigh News and Observer* regularly carried news of these additions.⁶¹ Although the trustees had discontinued the practice of circulating books to the public prior to opening the new library, Birdsong did assist the public, including schoolchildren, in using the facility's reference materials. Indeed, he said in 1887 that he endeavored "to make the State Library a place where *any* citizen of [the] State can at all times feel at liberty to visit and consult any book or newspaper to be found on its shelves."⁶²

59. *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1887–1888*, Document 17, *Public Documents*, 1889, 4.

60. J. C. Birdsong to Joseph Walton, December 1, 1887, State Librarian's Letter Book, May 22, 1882–December, 1887, Administrative Division, North Carolina State Library (hereinafter cited as Librarian's Letter Book), State Archives; *Raleigh News and Observer*, September 10, September 27, October 5, 1887, February 9, 1889. Birdsong (1843–1918), was born in Southampton County, Virginia. He served in the Virginia Infantry during the Civil War and moved to Raleigh in 1866. A printer by trade, he worked for Edwards, Broughton and Co. and served as examiner of state printing. He held the position of state librarian from 1885 until 1893. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Birdsong, James Cook." The North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, now North Carolina State University, was the state's first land grant college. It was chartered in 1887 and opened in 1889. *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, s.v. "North Carolina State University."

61. *Raleigh News and Observer*, November 21, 1888, August 20, 26, September 14, 1890, March 24, 1893. Olds (1853–1935) was the son of Pauline and Louis Olds, natives of Pitt County. He was raised by a relative in Hillsborough after the death of his mother. He attended schools in Cary and in Virginia before settling in Raleigh. Olds served as city editor of the *News and Observer*, but is best known for his tireless work to promote the preservation and understanding of the state's history. The portraits and artifacts he collected initially found a home in the State Library and later formed the nucleus of the Hall of History, now the North Carolina Museum of History. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Olds, Frederick Augustus."

62. J. C. Birdsong to D. W. Bullock, January 28, 1887, Librarian's Letter Book; J. C. Birdsong to W. J. Yates, October 5, 1887, Librarian's Letter Book (quotation); *Raleigh News and Observer*, September 14, 1890.

Additional improvements in the library took place in the late 1890s. In his report for 1897–1898, State Librarian R. A. Cobb reported that the library had extended borrowing privileges to all teachers in Raleigh’s public schools; instructors at St. Mary’s College, Peace Institute, and the North Carolina Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind; and to students at the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Moreover, Cobb gave permits to many state officers and their friends, thus making the State Library “equal in benefits to any regular circulating library.”⁶³ In 1899, after considering the possibility for nearly a decade, the trustees found the means to open the library from 8:00 to 10:00 P.M., largely to accommodate citizens who worked during the day. Also that year, the state’s first professionally trained librarian, Benjamin Wyche, was hired for several weeks to catalog and classify the collection according to the Dewey Decimal Classification. Wyche and his temporary assistants created author and subject cards and filed them in a new cabinet purchased to house the catalog.⁶⁴

It is not surprising that State Librarian Miles Osborne Sherrill, a Confederate veteran, had not cataloged the library’s collection, for he lacked the professional qualifications. North Carolina’s failure to appoint a trained librarian to manage its state library was not unusual. Although Melvil Dewey, the energetic state librarian of New York, and eight of his colleagues in 1889 had established the National Association of State Librarians at the annual meeting of the American Library Association, most state librarians of the late nineteenth century demonstrated little interest in the organization’s efforts to promote professionalism and library development in their states. A decade after the organization’s formation, Dewey complained in a letter that “most of our state librarians are asleep.”⁶⁵

In many states, immigration, urban growth, railroad development, and industrialization during the late nineteenth century led to changes that gradually lessened state libraries’ roles as cultural institutions. These trends spurred a growing interest in public education and universal literacy as means of promoting good citizenship and a stable society. Public graded schools spread throughout the country’s cities and towns. Changes in higher education took place in response

63. *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1897–1898*, Document 10, *Public Documents, 1899*, 38.

64. *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 24, 1891, December 18, 1898, August 15, 22, 1899; *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1899–1900*, Document 22, *Public Documents, 1901*, 6. Wyche (1869–1936) was born in Williamsboro. He studied at the University of North Carolina before receiving library training at Amherst College. Wyche served as librarian at the University of North Carolina from 1894 until 1897. He then took a position at the University of Texas. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Wyche, Benjamin.”

65. Wiegand, “Historical Development of State Library Agencies,” 6–7. Sherrill (1841–1919), who lost a leg during the Civil War, served as clerk of the superior court of Catawba County and in the North Carolina House of Representatives and North Carolina Senate before assuming the position of State Librarian in 1899. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Sherrill, Miles Osborne.”

to the belief that the country would increasingly be led by businessmen, professionals, scientists, and trained farmers. Charles William Eliot of Harvard University urged colleges and universities to adopt broader curricula that would give students more flexibility in choosing a course of study. The Morrill Act of 1862 stimulated the creation of land grant institutions that offered technical education. Led by the Johns Hopkins University, many academic institutions began to offer graduate instruction grounded in research methods commonly employed in German universities. Public libraries embraced their role of providing adults with the opportunity to improve their lives. In most states, state library commissions, rather than state libraries, promoted public library development.⁶⁶

North Carolina remained a largely rural state well into the twentieth century, but like much of the country, it experienced significant industrialization and urban development during the period after 1880. As in other states, this trend spurred educational development. Railroad tracks quickly connected many cities and towns, and investors built a considerable number of cotton mills that lured workers from rural areas. Whereas only Wilmington had a population of more than ten thousand in 1870, five other cities reached that milestone by 1900. Many smaller towns developed during this period. Led by such visionary educators as Edwin Anderson Alderman, Charles Duncan McIver, and James Yadkin Joyner, the graded school movement spread throughout the state. In addition to the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, legislators created institutions of higher education for blacks and women. Administrators at the University of North Carolina modernized the school's curriculum to offer instruction to students interested in pursuing vocations in such fields as agriculture, engineering, and the sciences. Also at Chapel Hill, the student literary societies and university officials laid the foundation of a more useful library by merging the three collections.⁶⁷

Although the Democratic Party orchestrated a racist political campaign in 1898 that gave it control of the General Assembly and, two years later, resulted in the disfranchisement of blacks and some poor whites, many North Carolinians benefitted culturally from a spirit of progressivism that developed around this time. Legislators in 1897 passed a law requiring towns with a population of more than one thousand people to organize a public library. The first tax-supported public library opened in Durham in 1898, and other cities, including Raleigh,

66. Wiegand, "Historical Development of State Library Agencies," 5–10; James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880–1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 19–21; John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, Fourth Edition, 1997), 62–64, 111–119, 174–182.

67. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 406–415, 442; Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 21–72, 107–133; York, "Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies' Contributions," 338–353.

Greensboro, and Charlotte, soon created tax-supported libraries.⁶⁸ Elected in 1900 on a platform of white supremacy and school reform, Gov. Charles Brantley Aycock, with the help of Superintendent of Public Instruction J. Y. Joyner, led a movement that resulted in significant improvements in public education during the early twentieth century.⁶⁹ In September 1900, a group of state leaders met in Raleigh to form the State Literary and Historical Association. They sought to encourage the “reading habit” among citizens, to foster the production of literature, and to collect and preserve historical material. The organization worked to promote the development of public and school libraries as well as a state history museum. At the association’s instigation, the General Assembly in 1903 established the North Carolina Historical Commission. Under the direction of Robert Digges Wimberly Connor, who served as secretary from 1907 until 1921, the commission embarked on a vigorous program to collect, preserve, and publish state records and manuscripts. The Hall of History, developed by Fred Olds, chairman of the State Literary and Historical Association’s Committee on Historical Museums, was administered by the Historical Commission beginning in 1914.⁷⁰ In 1909, the General Assembly established the North Carolina Library Commission to promote library development in the state. The commission included the state librarian, the superintendent of public instruction, and two members appointed by the North Carolina Library Association, which had been formed in 1904.⁷¹ Under the leadership of President Francis Preston Venable, who took office in 1900, the University of North Carolina made significant improvements in organization and scholarship as it strove to become a highly regarded modern university. With the energetic guidance of librarian Louis Round Wilson, the university built a new library building in 1907 to house its rapidly growing collection of some 50,000 volumes.⁷²

68. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 433–438; *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, s.v. “Public Libraries”; Thornton W. Mitchell, *The State Library and Library Development in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of State Library, 1983), 10–11.

69. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 133–176.

70. *Literary and Historical Activities in North Carolina, 1900–1905*, Publications of the Historical Commission, Vol. 1 (Raleigh, N.C.: E. M. Uzzell and Co., 1907), 1–5, 21; Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries*, 448–449; *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, s.v. “Historical Commission” and “North Carolina Museum of History.” Connor (1878–1950) was born in Wilson and educated at the University of North Carolina. Gov. Charles B. Aycock appointed him to the North Carolina Historical Commission in 1903. He served as its secretary on a volunteer basis until 1907, when the General Assembly appropriated funds for a salaried position. Connor built the commission into a model state archival agency, which in 1943 became the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History. He served as the first archivist of the United States between 1934 and 1941. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. “Connor, Robert Digges Wimberly.”

71. Mitchell, *State Library and Library Development*, 14–17.

72. Louis R. Wilson, *The University of North Carolina, 1900–1930: The Making of a Modern University* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 43–145; Edward G. Holley, *The Library, Philanthropy, Publications, and UNC’s Emergence as a Major American University* (Chapel Hill: Hanes Foundation, Rare Book Collection, Academic Affairs Library, 1998), 7–8.

Even though these developments gradually diminished the State Library's preeminence as a cultural resource, officials took significant steps in the early twentieth century to develop the collection, provide better access to it, and improve its facilities. In response to legislation enacted in 1901, the trustees appointed a committee to select books for the library. Members included Judge Walter Clark, professor Daniel Harvey Hill of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, the superintendent of the graded schools of Raleigh, the superintendent of public instruction, and State Librarian Miles O. Sherrill. This committee sought to collect books about North Carolina and by North Carolinians. Although the State Library's collection was available for reference use only, the committee did purchase fiction by North Carolinians or set in the state. Of particular note was the acquisition of remnants of the colonial collection owned by James Hasell of Wilmington, which included one volume signed in 1695 by Christopher Gale, who later served as chief justice of the colony. During the first decade of the twentieth century, college students continued to patronize the library, and as a result of the "revolution" in public education under way in North Carolina, school students of all races used it as well, although beginning in 1901 a separate reading room for "the Colored People" had been established. Staff members of the North Carolina Historical Commission found the State Library's collection to be indispensable for their work.⁷³ The state created the position of assistant state librarian, a position held by Carrie Longee Broughton beginning in 1902.⁷⁴ With the help of the Library Commission, Broughton later reorganized the collection, re-cataloged and reclassified many of the books, began keeping accession records and a shelf list, and created a true dictionary catalog containing author, subject, and title cards arranged alphabetically.⁷⁵

The progress of the State Library clearly impressed Stephen B. Weeks, who, over a period of many years, had amassed the largest collection of printed North Caroliniana in private hands. Around 1905, the North Carolina Historical Commission asked Weeks to write an essay describing the metamorphosis and content of his collection. After describing his treasures and how he had acquired them, Weeks noted the collections of three other North Carolinians: Forster A. Sondley of Asheville, H. R. Scott of Reidsville, and Thomas M. Pittman of Henderson. "Were these four private Collections brought together as part of the

73. *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1900–1902*, Document 17, *Public Documents, 1903*, 5–6; *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1906–1908*, Document 17, *Public Documents, 1909*, 6; *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1912–1914*, 27. (This and subsequent published reports of the state librarian cited in this paper are among separately published editions located in the State Library.)

74. Broughton (1879–1957), the daughter of Caroline L. and Needham B. Broughton, was born in Raleigh. She studied at Peace Institute, Meredith College, and the North Carolina State Normal and Industrial School in Greensboro. The first woman to head a department of North Carolina's state government, Broughton assumed the role of State Librarian in 1918. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Broughton, Carrie Longee."

75. *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1908–1910*, 8.



Carrie Longee Broughton became assistant state librarian in 1902 and was named state librarian in 1918. She is shown here examining the State Library's rare double elephant folio edition of Audubon's *Birds of America*. Photograph (September 9, 1940) from the *Raleigh News and Observer*, reproduced by permission; copy courtesy of the State Archives.

State Library," he declared, "North Carolina would have, with what she now possesses, in the form of newspapers and public documents, a mass of material beyond the rivalry of future collectors and in fullness perhaps unsurpassed by any similar Collection in other States."⁷⁶

The need for a new building to house the library became clear as early as 1906, when R. D. W. Connor addressed members of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association on this subject. By this time the collection contained more than forty thousand volumes in addition to pamphlets and a large collection of bound newspapers. Connor stressed that "the destruction of this library would be a calamity to North Carolina from which there would be no recovery. . . ." He recommended the construction of a fireproof building to house not only the State

76. Stephen B. Weeks, "The Weeks Collection of Caroliniana," in *Literary and Historical Activities*, 602. Ironically, Weeks's incomparable collection was purchased in 1918 by the library of the University of North Carolina. Louis Round Wilson, "The Acquisition of the Stephen B. Weeks Collection of Caroliniana," *North Carolina Historical Review* 42 (October 1965): 424-429.



By 1906, Secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission R. D. W. Connor recommended that a fireproof structure be built to house the State Library, which had outgrown its location in the Supreme Court and Library Building. In 1914, the library opened in its new location on the first floor of the Administration Building, across the street from the State Capitol. View of the reading room in the State Library from *Biennial Report of the State Librarian*, 1914.

Library, but also the Hall of History, offices of what was still known as the North Carolina Historical Commission, and quarters for related organizations.⁷⁷

Connor's dream of a fireproof building became a reality in 1914 with the opening of the Administration Building, conveniently located on Morgan Street across the street from the State Capitol. Constructed at a cost of \$250,000, the handsome stone edifice provided space for several departments of government. The Supreme Court occupied the third and fourth floors, the second floor housed the Historical Commission, and the State Library was located on the first floor. The structure was opened to the public on the evening of February 2 during a special ceremony at which Gov. Locke Craig accepted it, representatives of the occupying agencies made speeches, and patriotic music filled the air. The State Library's east wing contained a "stack room" for the general library, government documents, and bound newspapers. Offices for the state librarian and his two assistants, reference books, and the North Carolina section occupied the west

77. R. D. W. Connor, "A State Library Building and Department of Archives and Records," *North Carolina Booklet* 6 (January 1907): 159-176 (quotation on p. 169).

wing. Use of the library's "well lighted and commodious" reading room, also located in the west wing, quickly increased.⁷⁸

Although the state librarian soon complained of a lack of stacks space and funding for acquisitions, the new building clearly symbolized the state's century-long and ongoing commitment to developing an important library collection for use by government officials and citizens alike.⁷⁹ The State Library's collection of newspapers and printed state documents, as well as the documentary volumes its trustees had sponsored, would prove to be of inestimable value to historians. In years to come, the library published important bibliographies of its North Caroliniana and newspaper holdings, compiled printed indexes of marriage and death notices contained in some of its newspapers, and built an outstanding genealogical collection. The advent of federal funding for extending library services coincided with the merger in 1956 of the North Carolina Library Commission and the State Library under the direction of the State Library Board of Trustees, thus greatly enhancing the library's impact on libraries throughout the state. Beginning in 1969, its services were carried out in yet another new structure, the Archives and History-State Library Building, located on Jones Street, between the Executive Mansion and the Legislative Building. Two hundred years after the collection occupied a single bookcase, the State Library continues to serve the people of North Carolina in this location.⁸⁰

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78. *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 1, 3, 1914; *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1912-1914*, 5-7.

79. *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1912-1914*, 6. The annual appropriation for acquisitions was still five hundred dollars.

80. For examples of bibliographies and indexes published by the State Library, see appendixes F and G, *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1918-1920*, and Carrie L. Broughton, comp., "Marriage and Death Notices from Raleigh Register and North Carolina State Gazette, 1799-1825," in *Biennial Report of the State Librarian, 1942-1944*. For an overview of the development of the State Library through the 1970s, see Mitchell, *State Library and Library Development*. The dedication of the Archives and History-State Library Building was described in the May 11, 1969, issue of the *Raleigh News and Observer*. Efforts to enhance the State Library's genealogical collection are noted in the *First Biennial Report of the North Carolina State Library, 1956-1958*, 17-18.