

LOUISIANA STATE LIBRARY

50th
ANNIVERSARY



The
Second
Twenty-Five
Years
1950–1975

The Second Twenty-Five Years
of the
Louisiana State Library
1950–1975

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THE SECOND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
of the
Louisiana State Library

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Foreword

This is the story of the Louisiana State Library as it is today, and the events that have changed the statewide library picture during the past 25 years.

With a small overlapping, this account takes up where the 1950 anniversary history ends. Those who haven't read the earlier one, by Margaret Dixon and Nantelle Gittinger, should; they would enjoy it.

Writing *The Second Twenty-Five Years* has been a pleasant experience—thanks to a patient and helpful staff, and particularly to the knowledgeable counseling of Vivian Cazayoux. Librarians are the nicest people!

WCH
March, 1976

The Beginning

No public library nearby? That idea would be unthinkable today to Louisiana citizens.

A central library, a branch or a bookmobile is within easy reach of practically everyone. Here for the asking is entertainment, information, cultural enrichment, instruction.

The woman's club looking for bicentennial program material; the blind student needing a braille textbook; the woman asking for her favorite mystery writer; the safety engineer wanting training films for his plant workers—all look to the public libraries. They are very seldom disappointed.

Take the case of the south Louisiana school where *The Mikado* was to be staged: "How do we do the oriental makeup?" the director asked anxiously. Channeled through several library sources, and with the aid of stage makeup books and drama-

tic periodicals, the answer was there before rehearsals began.

Then there were the real estate developers who wanted help on planning a water garden for their industrial complex. Three national library specialists were consulted by the State Library staff, books on the subject were borrowed from several states, one-of-a-kind materials were duplicated and mailed. At the end this was probably the most comprehensive collection anywhere on how to handle an unusual garden area in an industrial setting!

There was nothing particularly remarkable about these cases; just modern, efficient library service. But they illustrate how far Louisiana has come from the early days, when a few dedicated citizens determined that the state should have a real library system instead of the meager five public libraries then in existence.



Today's Louisiana library serves in many ways. Mrs. Howard Labauve, assistant at the West Baton Rouge Library, helps a patron choose an art reproduction while others wait to check out films, books and reference materials.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

The 1925 beginning—hardly more than a gleam in the eyes of the hopeful—was one room in the old State Capitol, housing one librarian, 2500 usable books and some borrowed furniture.

A group of clubwomen in 1915 had taken it upon themselves to start sending out a few travelling libraries. Later they joined other groups to put through the legislature a bill establishing the Louisiana Library Commission (which, in 1946, would become the Louisiana State Library).

But it was still just a service on paper until 1925 when the League of Library Commissions, armed with \$50,000 from the Carnegie Corporation, decided that here was just what it was looking for: a rural state with a law providing for a state library extension agency, but no money to put it into action.

The state legislature appropriated library funds from the second year on. The Louisiana Library Commission was in business.

The first service in 1925 was book-lending by mail to anyone anywhere in the state; the only charge was paying return postage. Three hundred requests were received the first year.



When the pioneering librarian, Essae Martha Culver, and the first Board of Commissioners decided that parish libraries were essential to serve the state well—and that actual demonstrations of their value would be the best way to sell them—Richland Parish was first on the demonstration list. And it was a success, in spite of the disastrous flood of 1927.

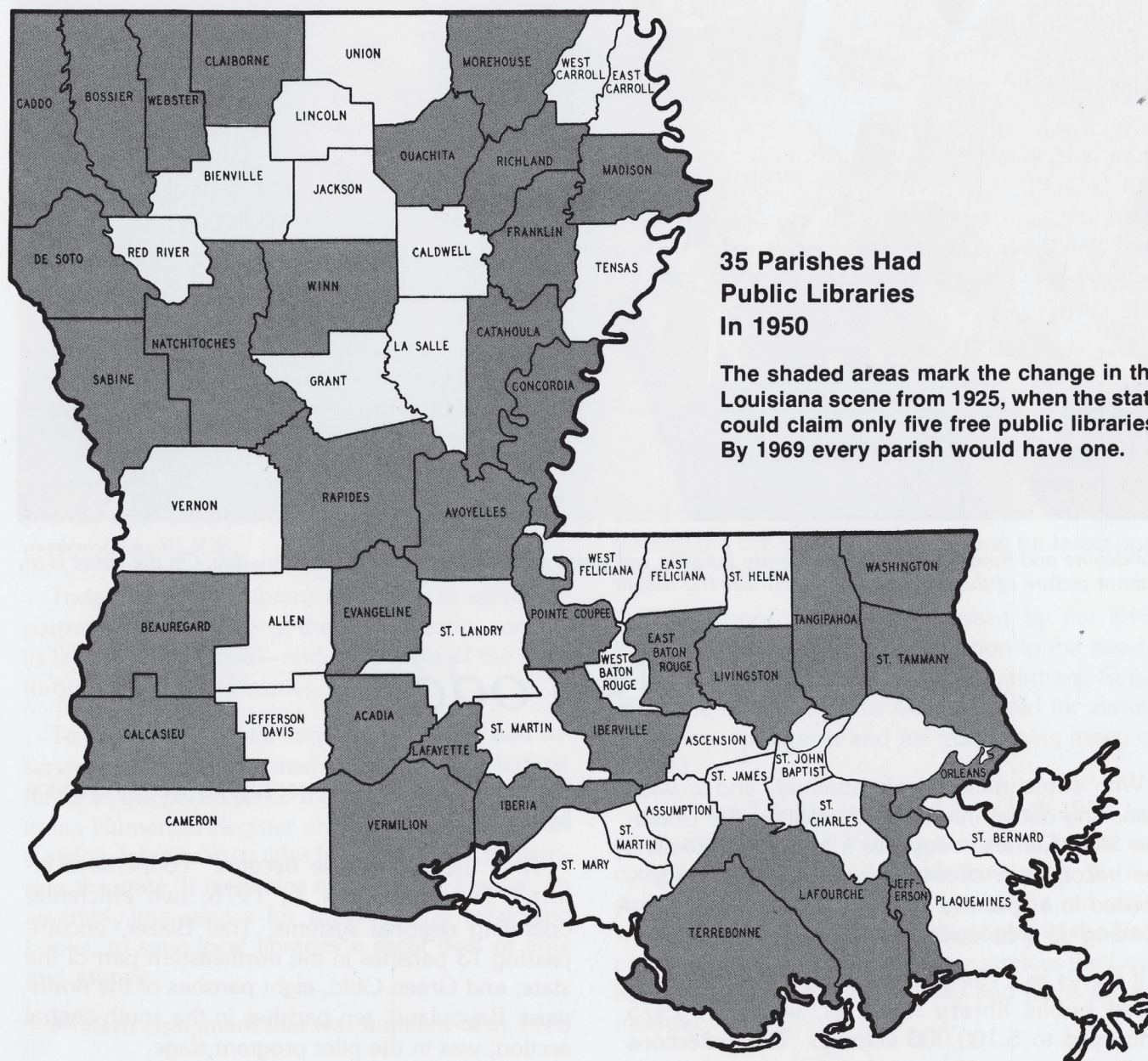
By 1950 Louisiana's much-acclaimed demonstration system (it drew observers from all parts of the nation and the world) had established public libraries in 31 parishes; 14 others were waiting their turn. A representative of the Carnegie Corporation termed it "one of the finest expenditures of Carnegie money . . . on record."

A whole new attitude toward the value of libraries developed in Louisiana during those first 25 years. Among the landmarks was a school library development program begun by the Department of Education in 1929 and the establishment in 1930 of a School of Library Science at Louisiana State University to train professional librarians.

There were 35 public libraries in Louisiana by 1950, serving 2,225,000 people. A resolution passed by the state legislature that year paid tribute to the library system as "one of our most valuable educational institutions."

The years that brought this about were tremendous years, filled with challenge and enthusiasm. Their accomplishments had been possible largely because of a very wise administration and the remarkably dedicated service of many people.

Essae Martha Culver, the energetic lady who started it all in 1925 with one room and 2500 books. She pioneered the demonstration programs, and guided the State Library's continual growth until her retirement in 1962.





Handsome and functional, the State Library building welcomes a steady stream of users every day. On the cover is an exterior picture of the architectural award-winning design.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

As It Is Today

With some major goals attained, and a wide branching-out of interest and services, the Louisiana State Library today has a totally new look. It has become an effective, sophisticated agency—housed in a specially designed modern building—heading up a statewide public library network.

It serves as a clearing house for the state's combined public library holdings, which in 1975 amounted to 5,100,000 volumes. The collections of all academic and special libraries in Louisiana are also available. And so are those of major libraries throughout the nation where books may be borrowed through rapid teletype request: a fabulous resource of knowledge!

When the parish library demonstrations had been triumphantly concluded in 1969 the State Library staff turned its attention to pilot programs

for Louisiana's institutions. Eleven were in service by 1975.

Then the key phrase became "cooperative effort." The result was, in 1975, two efficiently operating regional systems: Trail Blazer, encompassing 13 parishes in the northeastern part of the state; and Green Gold, eight parishes of the northwest. Bayouland, ten parishes in the south-central section, was in the pilot program stage.

A cooperative effort centered in Orleans Parish, the Southeast Louisiana Library Network Cooperative, was serving five parishes.

In 1971 cooperation branched out even farther when Louisiana joined five other states in the Southwestern Library Interstate Cooperative Endeavor (SLICE). Practical means of sharing re-



Sallie Farrell, dynamic and enthusiastic leader who served as State Librarian from 1962 to 1975. During her 39 years on the State Library staff she saw many parish library demonstrations to a successful conclusion and was the principal architect of the Regional Library Systems program.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

sources and expertise across state lines are being explored by SLICE.

Today the State Library continues to serve departments and officials of the state directly—one of its legislated functions—and the people of the state through the parish libraries.

To the latter it offers consultant services and in-service training programs, and channels federal funds to the parish level. It houses the prized Louisiana Numerical Register and the Louisiana Union Catalog, interlibrary guides for locating materials inside the state. It maintains a Processing Center, an assembly-line service for ordering and cataloging books, to save local libraries a great deal of time and money.

Modern equipment that was unheard of in 1925

and barely thought of in the '50s, is now in use throughout the State Library building for faster and more efficient service.

The Library Services Act passed by the 84th Congress gave a sudden acceleration to the steady but slow pace toward a good library program. Since 1958 the funds from this Act have paid for almost all the new programs and for maintaining many of the old.

How the Louisiana State Library of 1950 became the library of 1975 is a story of much accomplishment and considerable frustration. It's the story of new goals set up as fast as the old goals were reached. Here are some highlights of the Second Twenty-Five Years—and the services the Louisiana State Library offers today and plans for tomorrow.



From 1950 to 1975

At the close of the first 25 years several major objectives were still at the other end of the rainbow.

Among them were completion of the demonstration program; an adequate building to house the State Library services; enough trained librarians to

handle the big job still ahead; and a budget sufficient to provide adequate library service to every citizen wanting and needing it.

All except the last were realized by 1975.

A Public Library in Every Parish

October 31, 1969, was probably the greatest day the Louisiana State Library will ever know. It was Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas all rolled into one: at long last there was a permanent public library serving every parish of the state!

The Jefferson Davis Parish demonstration had just ended, the people had voted support for it, and the library was theirs.

It was an especially fine moment for Jeff Davis. Though the last to enter the State Library family, it had been the second to be offered the opportunity. That early demonstration was conducted in 1927. The combination of a flood and a depression sent the price of rice, the parish's major source of income, below production costs. Times were hard; the vote was "No."

Of course the demonstration story includes such setbacks as well as the triumphs, but it's the grand finale that impresses: from an almost library-less state to border-to-border coverage is no mean feat.

Each parish project brought its own particular challenges, and needed its own special handling. The basic methods, however, were the same everywhere.

"Demonstration" meant just that. For one year (with two exceptions) the State Library would plan, staff and do most of the financing of a professional-quality library, to demonstrate to the citizens what such a facility could mean to them.

The parish had to take the initiative. The governing body (Police Jury) was required to pass an ordinance establishing a library, request the demonstration, and acknowledge its "moral obligation to continue the service after the demonstration." The

Police Jury also agreed to pay certain expenses. However, after federal funds became available the parish obligation was reduced, and in some cases was almost a token sum.

At least one library center and one or more bookmobiles were provided for each demonstration. They were stocked with from 8000 to 31,000 books, depending on the population, plus magazines and newspapers.

Before the demonstration period ended the property owners of the parish voted on assuming support of the library. If both popular and property votes were "Yes," the State Library left all books in the parish as an indefinite loan, and the bookmobiles were left until the parish could replace them.

Though it followed the prescribed pattern, each demonstration had its special highlights.

Among the out-of-the-ordinary records made in various parish demonstrations were those such as St. John the Baptist which, in 1966, scored the most enthusiastic vote—93.9 percent popular, and 94.6 property; West Carroll's proud 1967–68 record for the highest first-year book circulation—7.26 books per capita; LaSalle Parish, in 1952, the only one to pass the support tax before the demonstration began; Assumption, 1968, the first parish to finance the permanent library with a sales rather than a property tax.

Then there was Franklin Parish where, in 1950, the Police Jury couldn't find enough funds for the parish share. A member of the library board begged permission to canvass house to house, and raised the tidy sum of \$3000.



This is a momentous occasion for the State Library: the dedication of the Jefferson Davis Parish Library, and the goal reached of a permanent public library in every parish of the state! Taking part in the October, 1969, dedication are Sallie Farrell, at left, and Essae Martha Culver. At right is Thomas Cassidy, chairman of the parish Police Jury library committee, and in the background is James Love, chairman of the Louisiana State Library board of commissioners from 1952 to 1957.

In St. Martin Parish the Business and Professional Women helped get things rolling. And roll they did! This parish, which in the demonstration year of 1955 had the lowest literacy rate in Louisiana—and many residents spoke no English at all—, voted five months after the demonstration began to support the public library. Voted not only to support the library, mind you, but passed a bond issue of \$160,000 for four library buildings as well.

Pas mal, ca!

Whether or not it affected the outcome, an interesting sidelight of the demonstration was that the libraries in St. Martinville and Breaux Bridge were blessed by the Catholic Church. The *Daily Iberian* newspaper described it as “a unique ceremony designed for the prospering of the libraries.”

This was the year of the Acadian Bicentennial celebration, which also may have helped prosper the library. During the first months the librarians were besieged for information about costumes for



Country stores were popular bookmobile stops where people gathered to wait for the traveling library. The bookmobiles were the very heart of the demonstration programs in the rural areas, and in some parishes they accounted for as much as 70 percent of all books loaned.

the Court of Children's carnival; how to re-enact the Durand wedding of the 1800's; and what the old May Day celebration was like.

Another Acadian area, St. Landry Parish, took a less happy turn. In 1966 its voters rejected the parish support plan by a scant margin of 24 popular votes.

The State Library was not willing to leave this gap in its service, nor were many of the St. Landry people willing. In October of 1967 an Opelousas-Eunice library system was established, the only bi-city program in the state.

A real success story, however, was the Audubon Regional Library, created in 1963. It was unusual, too, in that it was established as a three-parish operation, and the demonstration was for two years instead of one.

The participants were St. Helena, East and West Feliciana. Low in population and in income, and linked geographically and historically, they felt that "the only way we can have a good library is to work together."

Library branches were established in St. Francisville and Greensburg, with the center in Clinton.

Two bookmobiles tirelessly toured the dusty country roads, and accounted for 70 percent of the 185,000 books loaned to registrants in the two years.

It wasn't an easy victory when election time came. Some of these people were being asked to vote on four new taxes that same year. But the support tax passed, and the Audubon Regional Library came into being.

The only other two-year demonstration began with tragedy. Hurricane Audrey, in 1957, had taken over 500 lives in Cameron Parish—and had ruined most of the books in the parish as well.



The Cameron Parish Library was one of the few benefits of Hurricane Audrey: the ferocity of the disaster brought memorial gifts for a library building, as a fitting tribute to the dead.

The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce was holding its convention at the time. Led by the delegates from Lake Charles, they pledged to give a library building as a memorial to the dead. Exactly one year after the hurricane, June 27, 1958, the demonstration began with the dedication of the memorial building. One of the first books checked out was *Weekend in September*—the story of the great Galveston storm.

An editorial in the *Cameron Parish Pilot* that day said, "Perhaps it is fitting on the first anniversary of Hurricane Audrey that the only public observance being made is not one of mourning but one that has to do with the betterment of the parish: the dedication of our new library."

The biggest demand in non-fiction books that first year was for volumes on home building, interior decorating, gardening and sewing. Readers were still repairing their damaged homes and lives.

But the book-hungry communities really asked for everything under the sun. A little boy who said Buffalo Bill was an ancestor of his (and he was!) wanted a book about him. A woman requested books on how to play the piano, and a man sent a note asking for *Nature of the Universe*. The patron who wanted "a book to make me cry" was given *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Cameron Parish is divided into wide expanses of farm land, marsh and wildlife range. This kept the bookmobile travelling over 1000 miles every month, making six long trips every other week—with ferry crossings on four of them. Several large school libraries had been completely destroyed, so the bookmobile stopped at every school outside the town of Cameron (where the center was located).

The bookmobiles were, in fact, at the very heart of Louisiana's unusual library demonstration program. As an agricultural state Louisiana was charged, with the very first library funds it received, to take the program to the rural areas. This the bookmobiles did—progressing from the small models that could carry only 500 books, back in 1958, to the huge air-conditioned, carpeted bookmobiles of today that offer readers a choice of 1200 to 2000 books, plus magazines and newspapers. Some are even equipped for films and other audio-visuals—making the bookmobiles far more than a lending facility.

The first one cost \$834. Today's vehicles cost anywhere from \$25,000 up. That is a lot of money in anybody's budget, but they provide modern professional library service in areas that otherwise could expect only a small branch operation with limited hours.

In 1975 there were 71 bookmobiles in 53 parishes taking library service to the people—where the people live.

The Caddo Parish demonstration was unique in that it was for bookmobile service only. Shreve Memorial Library had served Shreveport since 1923, and had later added some 15 small branches scattered throughout the city and parish. When asked for recommendations, the State Library con-



Not many libraries can claim a stop so dramatically named! This one, in St. Bernard Parish, is just one of many where bookmobiles bring entertainment and education into lonely places.

sultant advised the use of bookmobiles that would replace some of the inadequate branches and supplement others.

Most of the Police Jury members were skeptical but they agreed to accept the demonstration. The State Library provided 9000 books, two bookmobiles and their staffs, and the program began in January, 1958. Each bookmobile travelled some 1500 miles a month on nine separate routes.

"It wasn't an instant success," said one of the mobile librarians. "We actually had to knock on doors and invite people to come out and see what the bookmobile had to offer—but almost all who visited became regular borrowers."

The bookmobiles served 30,000 people who had had no library facilities before. The Police Jury agreed, even before the demonstration ended, that it was too good a service to lose, and appropriated

\$29,500 to continue it. A third bookmobile now takes care of outlying city areas.

The bookmobile libraries have always provided a very personal service, stopping anywhere that five to ten borrowers could be served. (With some exceptions. One veteran driver chuckled, "That torrid 1953 summer in St. Mary Parish, it was anywhere we could find a shade tree!")

Their reports are full of human interest: the woman who drives up with a carload of six children, and requests a book titled *What Shall We Name the Baby?*; the trapper who criticizes Zane Grey for saying a "chit of a girl" could ride an unbroken horse; the reader who brings the driver and librarian a sample of the cake made from a library-loan cookbook.

By the time the demonstration period was ended in 1969 Louisiana's bookmobiles had loaned hun-

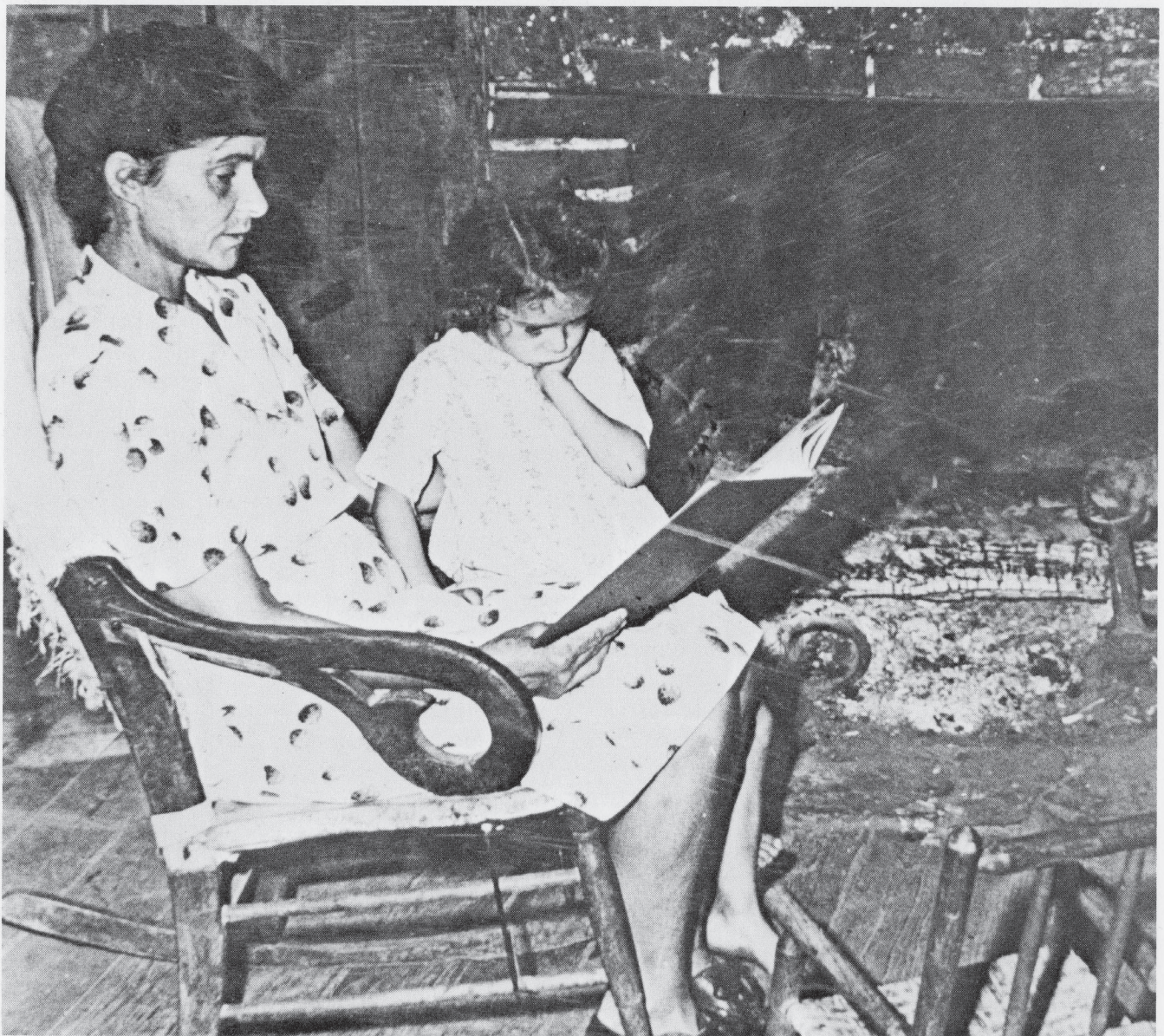
dreds of thousands of books to people in rural areas—accounting for about one-third of the total books circulated in the state. No wonder a national library figure described the Louisiana program as “one of two top systems in the nation . . . in its service to the rural people.”

A spokesman for the National Education Association termed the demonstration program as a whole “one of the most spectacular endeavors of adult education.”

Some of the more unusual parish demonstrations have been cited. Less colorful, perhaps, but equally

successful were these others on the 1950 to 1969 roll call: St. Tammany, 1950; Claiborne and Iberville, 1951; Tensas, 1952; Caldwell, 1953; St. Charles, 1955; Union and Vernon, 1956; Allen and St. Bernard, 1957; Plaquemines and Grant, 1959; Jackson and Ascension, 1960; Red River and Lincoln, 1962; Bienville, 1964; West Baton Rouge, 1965; St. James, 1966, and West Carroll, 1967.

All these parishes supported their local libraries, in the demonstration periods and since. Their continued renewal of support taxes, and the new buildings they have financed, are proof that they believe in the importance of the library program.



A bedtime story from a new library book can turn the humblest cabin into fairyland. The Louisiana demonstration program, featuring bookmobile deliveries into remote areas, was named one of the finest systems in the nation in service to rural people.



Down comes the Old Hill Memorial Library—built in 1903 for the old LSU campus, and the home of the State Library from 1940 to 1957. After months of heated debate about a site, it was decided to tear down the impossibly crowded old quarters and build a new library at the same location.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

A New Home for the State Library

The state legislature showed the same belief in June, 1954, when it passed a bond issue including \$2 million for a new state library building.

That long-dreamed-of structure that would allow the State Library to function with maximum efficiency was ready for occupancy in 1958.

For 33 years the Library had operated as best it could in totally inadequate quarters. In 1932 it had been moved into the new state capitol, but since 1940 it had occupied the old Hill Memorial Library on the capitol grounds, coping with a woeful lack of space. Valuable gift collections had to be refused because they could not be properly cared for.

The Citizens Library Movement, reactivated in 1953 from the early days, spearheaded the drive for a new building. Dozens of organizations (the Louisiana Federation of Women's Clubs was among the first) and hundreds of individuals worked toward the final success.

The media vigorously pointed the way editorially, and reported statements such as that of the Board of Commissioners chairman who said, "Under present conditions only one demonstration is possible per year. . . . It will take 25 more years to open libraries in the 25 parishes now without them."

And the Associated Press wasn't really joking in its 1954 news item about the State Library being "more worried about termites than bookworms."

The beautiful new quarters were officially opened in November, 1958. The single quiet paragraph presenting this fact in the biennial report was a masterpiece of understatement—in no way reflecting the tumult of those four years!

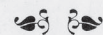
The funds had hardly been allocated before the site fight began. Two locations were chosen and rejected, with heated debate in the press and the legislature, before a third site was finally settled upon and a third plan approved. After bids had been accepted the contractor filed suit against the demolition firm.

Perimeter demolition of the old building's facade was just beginning when cracks appeared, the structure was pronounced dangerous, and the library staff told to evacuate within three days.

For the next two years they carried on their library service from the Commerce Building in downtown Baton Rouge and two buildings at the U.S. Engineering Depot at Sharp Station. With all the hectic problems and cramped quarters, however, the library's public services stopped functioning for only four months in the whole period—to move out and to move in.

The final product made the interim agonies worthwhile. The five-story building has been a joy of attractive efficiency. The design, by architect John Desmond, has won several honors and has attracted idea-seeking librarians from all parts of the country.

Most important was the librarian-mind-boggling space! Demonstration collections could be assembled two at a time. The Department for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, handled by the New Orleans Public Library since 1932, finally could be brought to the Baton Rouge center. And the Negro service, carried on previously at Southern University in Baton Rouge, could also be included in the new quarters.



Public library facilities have changed almost as dramatically during this last 25 years.

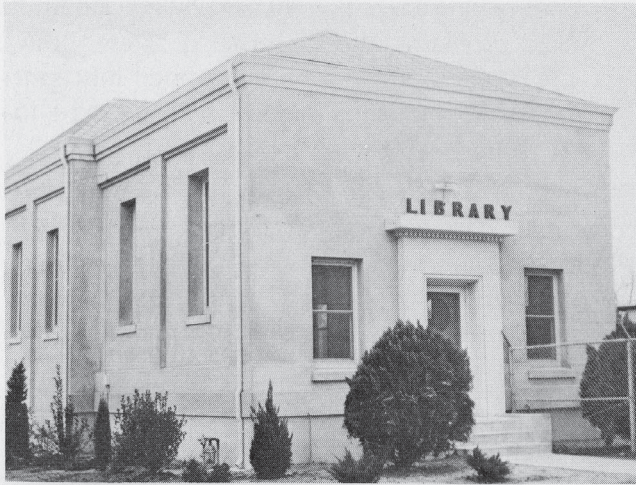
In the demonstration days all sorts of makeshift buildings were ingeniously adapted. An unused jail came in handy at Tallulah; the former "Bucket of Blood" saloon was converted at Hahnville; an empty school served in Evangeline Parish, and former funeral homes were used in several parishes.

Most of the makeshifts have long since been remodeled or discarded—as has Tallulah's jail. A \$275,000 headquarters building (whose funding began with a 1962 high school memorial gift) was dedicated in Tallulah in 1975.

The huge boom in library building came after construction funds were added to the federal Library Services Act in 1964. However there was also a great deal of local money invested in the total of more than \$10 million spent for new library buildings in Louisiana between 1964 and 1975.

It's nice to note, too, that amid all the bustle of progress and modernization one pleasant historic landmark remains. The Audubon Regional headquarters, serving East and West Feliciana, and St. Helena, is still housed on famed Lawyer's Row in

Clinton. The building was erected about 1840, and books have been loaned here since 1919—justifying its claim as Louisiana's oldest library building.



Early parish libraries had to make do with any quarters that were available—and the building used as the Madison Parish Library from 1945 to 1975 (left) began its career in Tallulah as a jail. Its successor is a handsome 8500-square-foot building which was completed in 1975, and is typical of the pride the parishes take in their library services.



Expanding Service to the Reader

Nothing much surprises the staff of the State Library any more. But the Reference Librarian did a double-take when she received a query on how to make methane gas from cow manure. "It's a fairly common idea now but it was brand new then. We couldn't believe it until our search turned up some facts about it!"

The Reference Department fields equally unusual queries almost every day. The staff answered 53,000 requests in 1975, for specific materials or for information.

This is the heart of the library, in service to the reader, along with the Department for the Blind and

Physically Handicapped, the Louisiana Department and the Films and Recordings Department. The latter two were new facilities at the beginning of the second 25 years, but they are doing a land-office business now.



Specific book titles make up about 80 percent of the requests to the **Reference Department**. Usually they can be found among the State Library's 250,000 volumes, which are selected with an eye to works that a local library would not be likely to own.

Here the reader will find the rare and beautiful art works, including several facsimile editions of the famous *Books of Kells*; complete scores of operas, such as *Madame Butterfly*; the very expensive U.S. Army histories of the Civil War, a 70-volume series titled *The War of Rebellion*. A drama collection transferred from LSU in 1951 includes 4800 acting editions. This collection is in constant use by the many Little Theaters and play-reading groups in the state.

Lists of newly acquired materials are sent every month to all public, academic and institutional libraries; and several state agencies regularly receive bibliographies of special interest to them. Reading lists, in fact, are a special service of the Reference Department. Some recent ones were done on request of the state construction industry—teachers of deaf children—a consumer education office—businessmen wanting material for executive training.

An invaluable book-location tool that makes the rest of the nation's libraries readily accessible for special loans is the *National Union Catalog*. Too vast an investment for smaller libraries, this reference series lists every book cataloged by the Library of Congress, and where it can be found.

A giant step toward locating any given volume in a Louisiana library was made in 1971 when the **Louisiana Numerical Register** (LNR) came into use. The Register now pinpoints the location of 1,628,000 books in 23 major libraries of the state—and does it on seven 4x6 microfilm sheets.

The LNR was an original concept developed at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. The idea, funded by federal grants through the State Library, proved so good that several states have copied it.

Book collections, by Library of Congress number and owner's code, were put into a computerized



The few small microfilm sheets—or microfiche—Mrs. Blanche Cretini is holding, and the microfiche reader beside her, are all the head reference librarian needs to locate any book in 23 major libraries of the state. Called the Louisiana Numerical Register, it will eventually include over 2,000,000 state listings.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

data bank. It was first available in printout catalogs, but now the library user needs only the seven microfiche and a simple reading machine. The LNR has been updated annually, but plans are to increase this to every three months.

The three regional systems and the SEALLINC network maintain their own registers now. In the near future all state listings—over 2,000,000 of them—will be included in one master file.

Another helpful location tool for the reference librarian is the result of a resources survey which inventoried the Louisiana libraries for their subject strengths. The findings of the three-year study were published and distributed to 240 libraries in 1971, to identify outstanding materials and forestall duplication.

But the most remarkable advance in the Reference Department's interlibrary service during the past 25 years is the speed with which a patron's request can be handled. Rapid communications between Louisiana's larger public libraries, the State Library and other library centers in the nation be-



Books not locally available may be obtained at record speed now, thanks to the TWX (teletypewriter) system which connects Louisiana's libraries with those of the entire nation for special requests. Mrs. Pat Coleman, library assistant, holds the TWX directory which lists hundreds of libraries in the U.S.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

came possible in 1969 when the teletypewriter (TWX) system was inaugurated. The machines send and receive messages at 100 words per minute, for immediate location of materials.

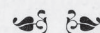
In 1970 all of Louisiana's public and academic libraries without TWX were given access to a toll-free IN-WATS line to the State Library. But, alas, IN-WATS was one of the first victims of the '72-'73 financial crisis.

On an average day the Reference Department answers between 300 and 400 requests. They come in by TWX, phone or mail, and most can be answered with a brief search and a short reply. But some take real digging: for instance, compiling statistics and information on Hurricanes Audrey and Camille, to be used in the appeal for Honduras hurricane victims in 1974.

One patron asked for and received a list of the

papaya-processing plants in Hawaii; another sought material on the seed extract method of typing blood. And a woman in LaSalle Parish wanted to know how to crack a safe—she had an antique one with no combination. (She was forwarded a book on modern locksmithing.)

Both the Reference and the Louisiana Departments played major roles in providing resource material to the delegates and staff of the Constitutional Convention. Cooperating with other agencies, they also provided a bibliography of reference aids for the committee of 1971 and the Convention delegates of 1973.



State officials and legislators address most of their queries to the **Louisiana Department**. So do a vast number of genealogists, writers, historians and, of course, the random information seekers.

A newspaper woman writing about a St. Landry Parish sheriff asked if he had been the last to officiate at a Louisiana hanging, in 1939. (Execution by hanging was banned as of 1941.)

The Louisiana collection librarian searched through the Acts of the Legislature, checked with the Board of Health vital statistics office (for death certificates), then with the Secretary of State, and back to the Board of Health. Final answer: there were two more hangings after the one the St. Landry sheriff had presided over.

"It's incredible that the library would go to such lengths to answer my question!" the writer marvelled.

The Louisiana Department receives around 5000 requests a year—such as the author wanting details of life in the Louisiana marshlands, for a Civil War novel; and the attorney with a question about Louisiana marine salvage law.

For the answers, the staff members delve into a huge and varied assortment of materials—40,000 cataloged items. The collection in 1975 included 8000 photographs (among them, Elemore Morgan's waterway series); 150 original works by Louisiana artists, from Clementine Hunter primitives to electronic cliché-verre art by Caroline Durieux; 800 maps; 19 file drawers of valuable WPA research for the *Louisiana State Guide*; census records for 1810 to 1880; microfilm of the state's oldest newspaper, the *Courier* of 1810 to 1860 . . .

Not to mention 160,000 state documents—to which about 5000 are added each year, since every enrolled legislative bill and state document goes into the Louisiana Department collection.

One of the bills passed in 1956 was initiated by the Louisiana Library Association, and provided \$26,000 to create a **Louisiana Union Catalog** (LUC) of items about the state or by Louisianians.



Mrs. Harriet Callahan, Louisiana Department head, displays a few of the huge variety of materials in her care. The department has 40,000 cataloged items, plus about 160,000 state documents—which increase by about 5,000 per year.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

By 1975 the Union Catalog was a listing of the total Louisiana collections in 107 libraries. About 5000 additions (1800 new titles) are received every year.

The LUC was printed in book form for contributing libraries in 1959. Supplements are issued about every five years. To the great convenience of researchers, an index to all the wide variety of material in the Catalog was published in 1968. This "Catalog in condensed form" met tremendous demand. (You can even find it in Britain and in France.)

The 1975 edition of the Union Catalog was produced on microfiche, and plans are to continue it in this form; while the Catalog swells in the number of items included, it will shrink in size.



Demands for the **Films and Recordings Department** services come from almost every facet of Louisiana life. About 100 selections are packed and mailed out every day to government agencies and housewives, business and industry, law enforcement offices and PTA groups, to mention just a few.

Films were an important part of the State Library-sponsored Citizenship and American Heritage programs of 1951; and in the mid-'70s they are in great demand for Bicentennial programs.

The department was inaugurated in 1949 with a collection of 37 films. The total is more than 1600

now, and the film prints were sent out over and over again in 1975 for a total of 33,928 showings before audiences of some 900,000.

Before they are mailed out electronic inspection machines check the films for damage or defects—more accurately and ten times faster than the old method.

Recordings—1000 albums of them—were added to the department in 1960. The collection has grown to 4364, and cassettes are also being acquired now. Many of the larger local libraries have recordings too, but the State Library filled about 6500 requests in the past year.

Would you like to learn Malaysian? The State Library can supply teaching records and manuals for that and 46 other languages; or records for learning such skills as shorthand, the Morse code and guitar playing.

A Greek language record manual proved a life saver—perhaps literally—in Chalmette. A Greek ship had left one of the crewmen there in the hospital. He was seriously ill and frightened, and spoke no English. Finally someone thought to call the library, which immediately sent over the manual with its phonetic pronunciations, and communication was established.

It is the films, however, which have the broadest impact for all levels of literacy. Whether for enrichment (the world's great paintings, for an art club

Over 1600 films at the State Library are in constant demand both for entertainment and instruction. They are particularly helpful for training sessions, such as pictured here.

—Photo by Art Kleiner



program) or instruction (a police-sponsored security course for baby sitters) they reach most audiences as a speaker seldom can.

In Louisiana the State Library films are in use at both ends of the age range. They are a vital teaching aid for small children in the Headstart program and regular film showings are the highlight of the week in nursing homes of 50 parishes.

One nursing home director telling about a group of black residents watching an Aretha Franklin film said, "That was certainly a swinging film! The cook came in to watch, and some of the patients got out of their wheel chairs. We had a ball!"

The head nurse of a pediatrics ward declared, "You just can't imagine how those children enjoyed

the films! I wish I could have snapped a picture or two of the complete absorption they showed when watching the stories."

"Your films get through," said the harassed leader of a center for underprivileged boys, "they help the boys make a step toward responsibility and manhood."

In response to the social concerns of the time, more and more requests (nearly a third) are for films on drug abuse, minority problems and solutions, the environment, welfare, alcoholism. They fill an information need not met by printed material. They're even therapeutic: State Library films are being used as valuable aids to therapy at all the state mental institutions.

For the Blind And Physically Handicapped

Films are of no use to the blind—but a whole world of books is theirs for the asking in the Department for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

The State Library took over this special program (then for the blind only) in 1958 when the new building provided specially designed quarters for it. Before that time the New Orleans Public Library had been commissioned to provide the service for for both Louisiana and Mississippi. The latter assumed responsibility for its own patrons in 1970.

This remarkable library service started in Louisiana only one year after the national program began in 1931. The government expanded it in 1966 to include other handicapped groups: those who cannot handle books, and those not legally blind but who cannot read conventional print.

Many in the state's hospitals and nursing homes find these books their major source of recreation. They can listen with ear phones, in the wards; pillow phones are available for the bedridden.

There were 21,000 volumes and magazines in the 1958 collection. Today Louisiana patrons can choose from a splendid variety of 83,000 "books"—braille, discs, tapes or large print editions—and current magazines as well. (Including *Playboy*. One impish blind patron, when returning this cassette, wrote, "I enjoyed the magazine, but you forgot the center-fold.")

Books for the program are supplied by the Library of Congress, supplemented by books taped or brailled by a number of dedicated Louisiana volunteers. The proposed new state constitution was produced by volunteers in both cassette and braille form, and it was also issued in large print.

There are even volunteer recorders in the State Penitentiary. Among their contributions are resource works for six blind case workers in the welfare department. And one young inmate is doing a braille version of Gwen Bristow's *Calico Palace* for the Louisiana collection of the department.

Textbooks needed by handicapped students of the state have top priority; special legal materials are taped for several law students and lawyers.

One of the biggest volunteer projects was a rush job for three students at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. All volunteers joined forces on this one, to finish quickly a 38-reel tape of *Basic Anatomy and Physiology*. This was later sent to a University of Illinois blind student, through interlibrary loan.

About 90 Louisiana students depend on material from this department for their college study. Specialized supplemental reading?—"If we don't have it, we'll get it!" say staff members.

The state's blind children also have a high priority in the department. The Louisiana State Library was



"Reading" is fun, even for the blind, as evidenced by Mary Jane Haupt. She is one of the State Library's many young blind or handicapped patrons who use its 83,000 "books"—braille, discs, tapes or large print editions.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

the first in the nation to have a librarian who gives them almost full time—to determine their reading needs and wants, and to work with the schools for the blind.

Louisiana's summer reading program for children, begun in 1970, received national recognition from the Library of Congress. Several states have since based similar programs on it.

An estimated 6000 people are regular clients of the Blind and Physically Handicapped service. The Department's average mailing is 360 selections every day—delivered right to the patron's door and returned without cost by the postal system.

One of Louisiana's most prolific "readers" is an elderly minister—a graduate of Yale, and formerly pastor of a large New Orleans church. Now he is

semi-retired and preaches in a small south Louisiana church. He has requested, and is sent, five books a week plus about 20 magazines a month.

"This is my recreation," he wrote, "but it also keeps me up on current events and provides material for my sermons."

A retired doctor, writing for himself and his wife, stated, "The talking books let us spend our days with much enjoyment rather than boredom—and give us something to discuss when a book is finished."

"This wonderful program has kept my mother (she's 82) alert and interested," commented another. "I honestly believe it has prolonged her life."

Serving The Public Libraries

Continued aid to the parish libraries is a function spelled out in Louisiana's library law. One important aspect of this is the service of the State Library **Consultants**. Serving as advisors and "trouble shooters," they visit every public library in Louisiana at least twice a year by car, bus or plane—with extra trips if requested.

In 1974 the consultant for north Louisiana (30 parishes) and the consultant for south Louisiana (34 parishes) travelled a total of 18,200 miles on library business. Besides the mileage there were over 400 telephone consultations with public librarians and trustees.

The problems they discussed varied widely: from guidelines for revenue-sharing proposals to how strong a bookmobile floor should be to carry the book weight.

When the problem of library censorship raised a threatening head the consultants and a parish librarian committee worked out a suggested book selection policy. A list of materials for use in reaching disadvantaged persons, and ideas for promotion and for tax election campaigns are among other practical aids the consultants offer.

Times change, equipment gets more sophisticated, and a professional has to run to stand still in library work as in any other.

Continuing Education is carried out in annual conferences and regional workshops to help professionals keep up to date on techniques and new library programs. In-service training, such as the

four regional projects in 1969, increases the skills of non-professionals.

An important goal accomplished during the second quarter-century was in having, finally, enough trained librarians to fill the professional library posts. The State Library worked toward this end with **Recruiting Programs** throughout the state.

The most positive approaches were the scholarships offered, with the aid of Library Services Act funds, from 1962 through 1970. Fourteen \$2,000 scholarships were awarded, each for a year of graduate work in library science. A project of two-month summer internships from 1967 to 1970 attracted 59 young people.

Since librarians are always discovering, to their vast amazement, how little aware the public is of the services their library offers—and the excitement of the books it holds—the State Library finds it important to carry on state-wide **Public Information** programs.

All media are used to alert citizens to undiscovered facilities. Kits of publicity material are sent to local libraries to help in special events, as stirring up interest in the Constitutional Convention. Seminars bring public relations experts in to advise and consult with library administrators.

The best kind of outreach to the public was the first Governor's Conference on Libraries in 1973—a success in spite of the rare Louisiana snowstorm which cut attendance drastically. "Li-

The Governor's Conference on Libraries in 1973 focused state-wide attention on library aims and problems. Called by Governor Edwin Edwards, the conference was co-sponsored by the Louisiana Library Association and the State Library.



brary Excellence: Louisiana's Challenge" was the theme of the conference called by Governor Edwin Edwards and co-sponsored by the Louisiana Library Association and the State Library.

"If our state is to achieve the excellence of which it is capable, all Louisiana citizens must be made aware of the services and needs of libraries of all

kinds," the Governor said in his keynote address.

A long-term benefit of the conference was the re-charged enthusiasm of the library community. Undoubtedly due to the conference and its far-reaching publicity was one parish's vote to increase the library support millage—and another starting plans for a new building.

Charting The New Directions

The time had come to look in new directions. There were many things that could and should be done. Which were most important, and how best to handle them? Hundreds of Louisianians, librarians and non-librarians, were involved by the time those questions had been answered.

John and James Humphry, outstanding New York library administrators who were experienced in such studies, were commissioned to do a comprehensive survey of the Louisiana library system. It was begun in 1966, and the result was presented in 1968 to the Louisiana Library Association annual meeting.

The Humphry report, *Library Service in Louisiana: Keeping Pace with Progress in the State*, gave these major recommendations:

—Of first importance were regional library systems, to tie each library in the state into a cooperative operation for better, faster and more economical service to the user.

—An expansion of the rapid communications network; a Processing Center to serve all libraries; an inventory of the special strengths of the state's libraries; more adequate funding; public information programs to acquaint the public with library services and to gain support.

It is doubtful if many studies have had greater exposure. More than 200 people were involved before the final phase was completed. Every LLA member had a copy in hand when the study committee began its work. It was a knowledgeable group in 1969 which accepted parts of the survey, tabled others.

(There was one instant result, according to the *LLA Bulletin* editor: "The survey has awakened the

library profession. It has caused all types of librarians . . . to think together about the total picture of library service in Louisiana.")

The LLA committee report was further analyzed by the 14-member Advisory Council on Libraries, and the State Library. In the final step a group of lay people and librarians developed in 1972 the library Goals for Louisiana—and a five-year plan for the implementation of the goals between 1973 and 1977.

Among these "realistic and achievable" goals were plans to upgrade personnel skills and library collections; to improve physical facilities; and to develop a research program for study and evaluation.

Looking toward aid to the disadvantaged was a service project for the Spanish-speaking population, the black community and the aged in Orleans and St. Bernard parishes. This was a special assignment to the New Orleans Public Library, with grants for 1972 and 1973.

"Jericho" was the project name—because it was an attempt to break down the barriers of language, lack of education, poverty and immobility. It was, understandably, a success in some ways, not in all; but it developed guidelines for future projects of the kind.

From 1968 to 1975 progress has kept a steady pace. Two years into the goals period, in 1975, libraries had been opened in 11 institutions.

The first regional pilot program had grown into two established systems, another pilot program and a cooperative network.

The Processing Center had been in operation for seven years, and was now handling an average of 1000 books per week for 54 libraries.

Processing Center

"We are a small library with a \$45,000 budget," wrote a north Louisiana parish librarian. "We have a small staff and a limited number of bibliographic tools . . . The cataloging done at the State Library releases time desperately needed for other tasks.

"Being the only professional librarian on the staff, if I had to do all the cataloging the total library program would bog down. The Processing Center has certainly made it possible for us to develop a better program . . ."

The Processing Center, designed to put books on local library shelves with maximum speed and minimum cost, started operation in 1968, just a few months after its recommendation by the Humphry report. In 1974 it processed 79,000 books.

The idea is simple and practical. Individual libraries send in orders for new books, and the Processing Center buys them at a considerable dis-

count to the member library because of the quantity. Cataloging can be standardized and performed once for all participating libraries.

When the books arrive at the State Library center, assembly-line techniques and special equipment make fast work of preparing the books for loan. When they are delivered to the library that ordered them nothing is left to be done except stamp them with the local label and place them on the shelves.

Another librarian happily reported, "The Processing Center has released 50 percent of the professional time and 25 percent of clerical time which we can now spend working with our patrons in reading and reference services."

Users of the Processing Center include the State Library, 42 parish libraries, and the 11 institutional libraries.



This stack of books in the Processing Center represents big savings in time and money for the parish and institutional libraries. The Center buys books at volume discount and sends them to the local libraries almost shelf-ready.

Behind Institution Walls

An elderly patient at the Central Louisiana State Hospital in Pineville was totally withdrawn. He never spoke, never seemed aware of his surroundings—until the day he was viewing a State Library travel film about Norway. Suddenly he exclaimed, "That's just the way it is! I've been there!"

A young man at the Correctional and Industrial School of DeQuincy said, "Going into the library is

like going into the free world." And that's probably as good a way as any to describe what a library can mean to the inmates at DeQuincy and Angola and St. Gabriel.

Library service was available in 1975 for 10,700 persons in 11 of Louisiana's health and correctional institutions: the mentally ill, the retarded, the prisoners.

The story goes back to 1947 when a demonstration was conducted at Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. The project died a-borning because the Penitentiary budget did not allow funds for continuing the library.

But when the end of the public library demonstration program was in sight it was time to try the institutions again—and Angola was first. The pilot program began in 1968, and was successfully concluded in 1970. Again the Angola administration was not able to provide its share of the pilot program funds; the prisoners' committee in charge of the inmates' welfare fund voted to supply the money.

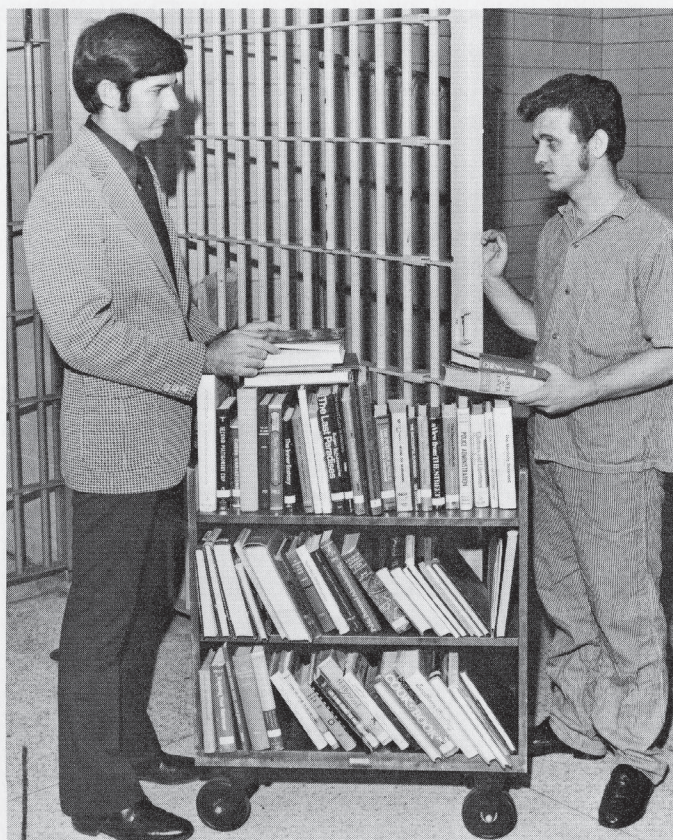
As in all these pilot projects, the State Library administered the Angola library for two years, and provided books, magazines, records and players, furniture, shelving—everything, in fact, but the staff salaries and appropriate quarters. At the end of the project all equipment was left in the library and the institution assumed responsibility for financing and administering. A member of the State Library staff continues to serve as consultant and advisor.

The major part of the cost comes from the Library Services and Construction Act, which in 1967 added funds for extending the program to state health, welfare and correctional institutions.

At Angola a bookmobile took library materials to outlying work camps, and carts of books went down the corridors of Death Row. In all, 46,000 books were circulated during the first year and a half.

An unusual offshoot of the Angola program was *Breakthrough with Books*, published by the State Library in 1970. This was a booklist, for adult correctional libraries, of the titles most read by Angola inmates. The 1000 copies published were quickly taken, and additional requests have come in from 37 states and six foreign countries.

At the Correctional Institution for Women at St. Gabriel, whose pilot program began in 1969, a stationary bookmobile served as the library until space was provided in the new buildings. Vocational material is popular here, and a number of women have used library books to help earn their high school diplomas. One girl, on being paroled, told parole board members, "The library at St. Gabriel has been the best thing that ever happened to me."



Service to those behind hospital and prison walls is one of the great programs of the State Library—which in 1975 extended this service to 10,700 people in 11 Louisiana institutions. The institution libraries contribute to rehabilitation as well as recreation: "the best thing that ever happened to me," said one prison inmate.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

It seems a shame, with response like this, that administration funds could keep the library open only three hours daily on weekdays—not at all on weekends.

Perhaps the most valuable service of all is the one available to the younger prisoners and first-offenders at the DeQuincy correctional school, which has had its library since 1969. "You can get about all the education you want here," commented one trainee. "Great Decisions" groups and film discussion sessions are popular, and many a reading certificate has been earned.

Central Louisiana State Hospital in Pineville was the first mental health institution to have a library, in 1970. A bookmobile makes the rounds of 12 buildings for patients unable to go to the library. Even some from the locked wards for violent cases are allowed to visit the bookmobile, with an attendant. Poetry therapy proved amazingly successful here, resulting in two mimeographed booklets of poetry by the patients, and more to come.

Emotionally disturbed young patients at Central have been reached through "YIP," A Youth Involvement Program. More than a library, the center becomes a youth clubroom with stereo, games, films, puzzles—and a librarian ready at all times to give individual attention.

"Bibliotherapist" is a relatively new name for a librarian who adds therapy to her services, working closely with the hospital staff. Such a program



It's not standard library equipment, but the jukebox in the Leesville State School for mentally retarded youth is a valuable part of the "bibliotherapy" provided by the library. Other unusual items such as a pet rabbit and parakeet, an aquarium, games, puzzles and models, along with the usual audiovisual materials, books and magazines provide the informal atmosphere of a youth center.

proved highly successful at Central. The librarian consulted doctors, nurses, and other therapists to decide the best way to appeal to each case.

The relaxed, non-medical atmosphere of the library formed a good background for individual or small-group therapy: reading and discussing a short story; watching a film and seeing how the film character handled *his* problems; listening to music, or writing poetry.

The bibliotherapist's salary was one of the budget cuts at Central, and no other such specialists have been appointed in any of the institutions. Another goal for the future.

By July of 1975, library services to suit their needs had been put into service at five schools for the retarded, and two more mental hospitals: Leesville State School, in 1971; Ruston State School and Southeast Louisiana Hospital in Mandeville, 1972; Hammond State School, 1973; East Louisiana State Hospital in Jackson, Belle Chasse State School, and Southwest Louisiana State School in Iota, in 1975.

What use are libraries for the seriously retarded? They can be a great help, say those who know. Emphasis is on the multi-sensory in these libraries, and books are fourth-grade level or less—with lots of pictures.

The library can be therapy and a new awareness for these unfortunates. Education and rehabilitation and—escape—for those shut in prison or mental hospitals. "Libraries have no walls."

Regional Libraries

A giant step in new directions for the Louisiana library program, on the heels of the institutional libraries, was initiating the regional systems.

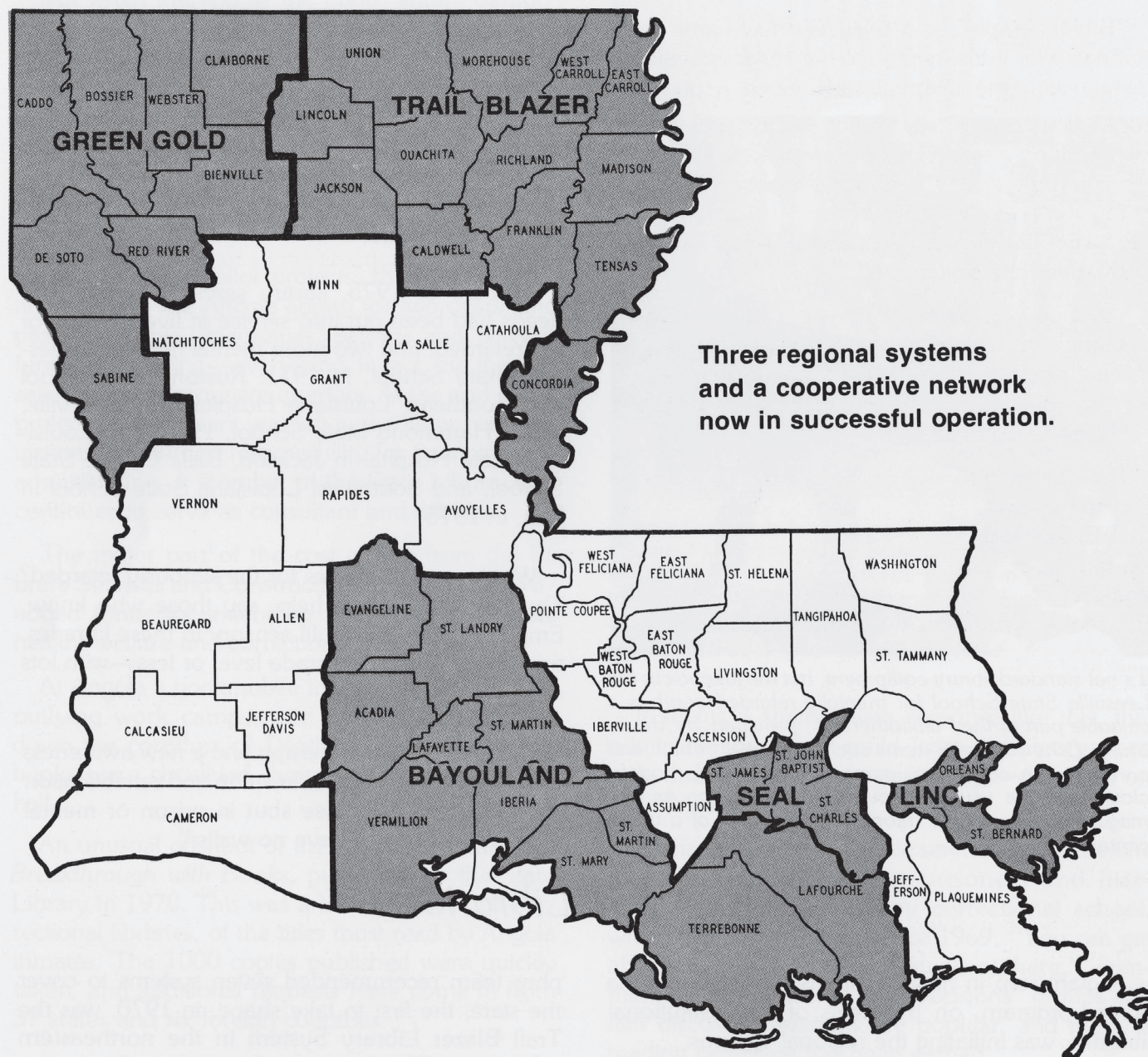
Combining efforts for better library service is not new in Louisiana. There was the tri-parish program that resulted in the Audubon Regional Library in 1963; and long before that a 1937–40 experiment in Winn, Grant and Jackson parishes (all of which have their own libraries today).

But multiple-parish cooperation, as considered by Louisiana library planners in the late '60s, was an entirely new and exciting concept. The Hum-

phry team recommended seven systems to cover the state; the first to take shape, in 1970, was the Trail Blazer Library System in the northeastern area.

The valuable forest lands of northwest Louisiana prompted the name of the next library system: Green Gold, established in 1971. The third library system included the Acadian region of south-central Louisiana. Bayouland was begun in 1974 and will complete its pilot program stage in 1976.

Serving not as a system but as a "network" is SEALLINC (whose acronym is a welcome shortcut



to the official title of Southeast Louisiana Library Network Cooperative). Begun in 1974, it is also still in the pilot stage.

What difference have the library systems made? The most obvious, from the patron's point of view, is the thoroughness and speed with which interlibrary loan service is conducted. All the books of every library in the system are available to him.

Does he want an unusual book, a brand new book? The channel of search may begin at the branch library—even a bookmobile stop. It goes through the system center, to all member libraries, to the State Library, and (if still unsuccessful) out into major libraries of other states. Telephone and TWX speed the search.

(An Epps resident, fascinated with the life of Lawrence of Arabia, asked for a rare annotated check list on him. The system found it in a California library—which sent the volume, insured for \$100, on to Louisiana.)

The patron finds that his library card is honored at every library in his own system. (Green Gold and Trail Blazer each honor the other's card, as well.) He can return a book to any library in the system, regardless of where it was borrowed. Station wagons make twice weekly rounds, delivering requested material and messages between libraries, returning borrowed books to their original outlets.

This is called a "courier" service in Bayouland and SEALLINC. The latter sends out its van five days a week; and provides the "Code-a-Phone" service for patrons after regular hours—calls made to the phone number are recorded for handling the next day.

These are the obvious advantages. What the library patron may not realize is that book collections of all member libraries have been enlarged and improved with system funds. So have the reference collections and location aids in every system center.

Cooperative in-service training programs to upgrade staff skills are assets. And the climate of support, as one system librarian described it, is strengthened: "Public officials as well as the general public are more aware than ever before of the library services and needs."

Then there are the enriching, imaginative "extras."

Take, for example, Trail Blazer—where the cooperation is among the public libraries of Ouachita (whose Monroe main library serves as system center), Union, Morehouse, East and West Carroll, Lincoln, Jackson, Caldwell, Richland, Franklin, Madison, Tensas and Concordia parishes; and the libraries of Northeast Louisiana University, Louisiana Tech University and Grambling University.

In the summer of '74 children throughout the Trail Blazer system were delighted with three traveling shows which performed at the member libraries. Called the "Follow the Reader" summer reading club, it enchanted audiences of all ages with a clown show, puppets and a magic show.

Libraries in the system exchange framed art prints, recordings and films. An adult education program has been offered, and parishes have cooperated on a weekly film series.

Green Gold has probably attracted most system-wide attention through its children's plays, a joint venture with the Centenary College drama department.

Here the member public libraries are those of Caddo (providing the system center at Shreve Memorial Library in Shreveport), Bossier, Webster, Claiborne, Bienville, Red River, DeSoto and Sabine; with the special library members of the LSU Medical School, Northwestern School of Nursing, and VA Hospital and the academic library members of Centenary, LSU-Shreveport, Southern-Shreveport and Bossier Parish Community College.

The travelling children's theater is produced by the Marjorie Lyons Playhouse, whose actors go on tour after the campus performances at Centenary—and they will never have more appreciative audiences. Some of the children (many were in the "Right to Read" program) had never before seen a live performance of a play.

"Symphony for Seniors" is another successful Green Gold project. The Shreveport Symphony orchestra started a series of eight parish concerts for the elderly in the spring of 1975. An afternoon opera dress rehearsal drew exactly twice as many elderly as expected.

A learn-to-read program for adults started in 1973. Some poignant reasons for joining the class:



The library "extras" are part of the real success of the regional systems. One of the most popular programs sponsored by Green Gold, in the northwest corner of the state, is the traveling children's theater. This is a joint venture with Centenary College in Shreveport, bringing drama to many children who have never before seen a live performance.

"I couldn't pass the drivers' exam" — "I can't keep up with my nursing class" — "I want to be able to read the sewing pattern instructions."

The unique history and culture of the Acadian area is of interest to a great many people. They find it more readily available now that the Bayouland Library System has prepared a bibliographic guide to the genealogy and local history collections of its member libraries. Queries from Quebec are fairly common these days.

The Lafayette Parish Library is center for Bayouland. Members include Evangeline, St. Martin, Acadia, Vermilion, Iberia, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche parishes, and Opelousas-Eunice. Academic members are the libraries of University of Southwestern Louisiana, Nicholls State University and LSU-Eunice.

Bayouland is also photographing and recording the sights and sounds unique to the area, to preserve the endangered species of folk culture, crafts,

architecture and local festivals. There are plans to record interviews with elderly citizens to preserve the old songs and folk tales.

SEALLINC counts as its members Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James and St. John parish libraries; plus the libraries of the University of New Orleans, Tulane University, Loyola University, St. Mary's Dominican College, Xavier University, Our Lady of Holy Cross College, Dillard University, Southern-New Orleans, Delgado College, Charity Hospital School of Nursing, LSU Medical Center, Bell Aerospace, and the USDA Research Center.

The systems are supported almost entirely by federal funds administered by the State Library. These federal dollars, uncertain from year to year, form a shaky foundation for the systems—and give no foreseeable promise of establishing new ones. A combination of local, state and federal support would provide the economic stability so necessary for the advancement of these cooperative efforts.

Kind Friends And Fellow Workers

Another type of cooperation has always been a basic ingredient of Louisiana's library progress. "The willingness to work together for the common good" was the way State Librarian Sallie Farrell phrased it. "This esprit de corps is the greatest strength of Louisiana's library system," she said.

The facts back her up. The energetic good will that helped drag the Louisiana library program up by its bootstraps in the first 25 years has been equally evident in the second 25. Countless individuals have worked for the libraries, including beyond-the-call-of-duty contributions by state and public library trustees; by the media; by local, state and federal officials.

Federated women's clubs, home demonstration clubs and PTA groups were in the first ranks of those campaigning to make the parish demonstrations possible. The Citizen's Library Movement was largely instrumental in promoting the new state building.

(And, even though his service ended before this account begins, no State Library history would be complete without mention of J. O. Modisette. A Jennings lawyer, he served on the library Board of Commissioners for 16 years, until his death in 1942, and was chairman for 15 of those years. He was the author of the public library law of 1926, still in effect; and was, in all ways, the effective and strong right hand of the State Library during the difficult early years.)

To assist in the broader and more professional needs, the Library Development Committee was established in 1965 by the Louisiana Library Association. This group of 30 to 40 people includes both professional librarians and laymen. It has been enormously valuable to the State Library and the entire system in helping to plan policy and to arouse citizen interest.

The State Library Board is required by the Library Services and Construction Act to appoint an Advisory Council. Its prime purpose is to take part in planning the use of federal funds—but the

Council's service extends far beyond that. This was the group that adopted the final goals for the state five-year plan, after a study of the needs had been made.

An action group with its targets clearly drawn is the Legislative Network. Organized in 1973 by the LLA, the Network totals some 240 library advocates, opinion leaders in their area. One or more from each parish is assigned to a legislator or congressman to keep the lawmaker informed of library activities and needs, legislative or financial.

They were called into action on the 1973-74 federal cut-back of library funds; in 1974, on the censorship legislation; and in 1975, to speak for the State Library's position in Louisiana's governmental reorganization.

Staunch friends, and much more, in their years of dedication through State Library good times and bad are included in the personnel rolls of the past quarter-century.

Miss Culver, who laid the groundwork for today's system, retired in 1962 after 37 years of remarkable service as State Librarian. Her value was recognized far outside the state boundaries. During her years with the State Library she was the first southern woman president of the American Library Association, and she was later awarded two honorary doctorate degrees.

Sallie Farrell, who became the second State Librarian, carried the challenging assignment for 13 years before she retired in 1975. During her 39 total years of service, most of them in field work, she was directly involved in establishing 44 parish libraries and the three regional systems, and in introducing the pilot programs into the state institutions.

The State Library has been blessed with a staff not only talented but also dedicated. The 15 who have retired (all since 1950) served from 15 to 39 years each; three still on the staff have contributed 20 years or more; a total of 494 years devoted to better libraries for Louisiana.

"Devoted" is the key word.

Funding: The Persistent Problem

Fiscal crises arrive almost as regularly as azaleas in the springtime for the State Library. But the crisis was particularly grim in 1973.

Because a White House-Congressional disagreement over the Health, Education and Welfare budget had held up federal funds, Trail Blazer was forced to suspend operations from August 15 to October 15. Green Gold continued on a restricted basis.

The materials budget of the Reference Department was cut 59 percent. The Department for the Blind and Physically Handicapped lost its director of volunteer recording and the New Orleans liaison person. The Films and Recordings Department had a 30 percent cut in staff and reduced funds for materials. The newly-established institutional library programs were curtailed. And, of course, a number of proposed new projects were quietly shelved.

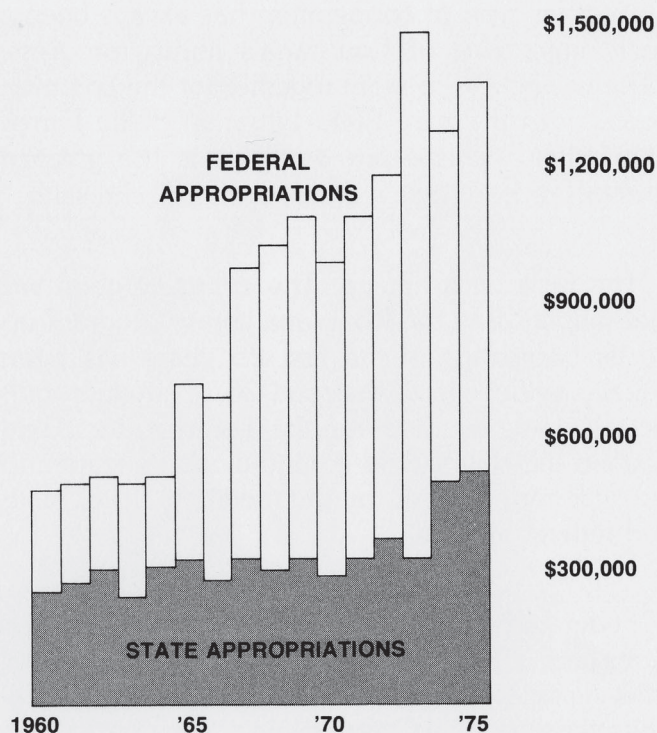
Eventually the funds were released, but this drastic situation spotlighted a basic problem of the State Library: too little support by the state, too much reliance on uncertain federal funds.

In 1957 Louisiana received its first allocation from the Library Services Act: \$40,000. The state appropriation that year was \$289,350.

Ten years later Louisiana's annual funding from the federal government was \$367,000. The state appropriated \$289,599.

And for the 1974-75 fiscal year the revenues were \$1,079,000, federal—\$538,250 from the state.

For the past ten years federal money has provided an average of 67 percent of the State Library budget—one of the largest percentages in the nation's library systems. Authorities recommend that the state share should be almost twice the amount of the federal funding. Instead, the 1975-76 state allocation does not even cover staff salaries.



"Leave it to Washington" could be the title of this graph, showing the disparity in State Library income from state appropriations compared to federal grants since 1960.

"Too much of the federal money has to go for day-to-day expenses, when it is intended to supplement—not replace—state dollars," the State Librarian pointed out.

"Frequently, too, it is the last quarter of the fiscal year before the amount of the federal allotment is known. This uncertainty makes intelligent long-range planning very difficult, to say the least." And long-range planning is a basic ingredient for the new directions of the future. Both much needed new services and ongoing programs will be jeopardized if the State Library cannot depend on an adequate, stable base of support.



The celebration of the 50th anniversary of the State Library also marked the retirement of State Librarian Sallie Farrell, and the beginning of his assignment for the new State Librarian, Thomas F. Jaques, pictured at the podium. The emphasis of the celebration was on goals for the future, built on the progress of the past.

—Photo by Art Kleiner

Where Now?

“Excellent library service is the right of every Louisianian, and should be designed to meet his educational, informational and cultural needs . . .”

This is the opening statement of the long-range library development program for 1973 to 1977. It is also the basic philosophy of the Louisiana State Library’s plan for the future, according to Thomas F. Jaques, State Librarian since July of 1975.

“We’re grateful for the past,” he said. “Its accomplishments have placed Louisiana’s library program on a firm foundation. Now we must search with vitality and imagination, for ways to expand the horizons of service. A strong State Library, providing effective leadership, is essential to this effort.”

All concerned agree that the Louisiana library program will not be what it should and could be until certain major goals are realized:

—Regional library systems should be established in the three areas not yet covered.

—The 17 health and correctional institutions still without libraries, or with inadequate ones, should receive library services tailored to their needs.

—Meaningful programs must be developed for those burdened with poverty or illiteracy, culture or language barriers.

—Ways must be found to inform ALL of Louisiana’s blind and otherwise physically handicapped persons about the program available to them. Only a small percentage of those eligible in Louisiana are now using the service.

—A statewide computer network for book location is a high priority goal toward faster and more efficient reader service.

With these and so many other challenges still ahead, the next 25 years should prove as exciting and productive as the past 25—and even the quarter-century before that.

The Louisiana State Library anniversary of the year 2000 should be well worth celebrating!