

1934

Handbook of the Bangor Public Library: 3rd Edition (1934)

Elmar T. Boyd

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HANDBOOK
OF THE
Bangor Public Library

Third Edition

BANCOR, MAINE

1934

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OF THE
Bangor Public Library



Third Edition



BANGOR, MAINE
1934

BOARD OF MANAGERS

CHARLES D. CROSBY, (<i>Chairman of Council</i>)	} Trustees of Hersey Fund
<i>Chairman of Board</i>	
CHARLES E. MILLETT, (<i>City Treasurer</i>)	
WARREN J. MOULTON	
WILLIAM F. CURRAN	
DONALD S. HIGGINS	
<hr/>	
HARRY D. BENSON,	} Representing Bangor Mechanic Association
<i>Vice-Chairman of Board</i>	
GEORGE F. EATON	
FRANKLIN E. BRAGG	
HORACE S. STEWART	

Treasurer of Board, HORACE S. STEWART

Secretary of Board, ELMAR T. BOYD

THE LIBRARY

ELMAR T. BOYD, *Librarian*

Hours: 9 A. M. to 9 P. M., daily, except Sundays and legal holidays. Sundays, November—March, 2 P. M. to 6 P. M.

Children's room closes at 6 P. M.

MUSIC BRANCH

166 Union Street

MRS. ALICE G. BIBBER, *Assistant*

Hours: 9 A. M. to 12 M., 2 P. M. to 5 P. M., daily except Saturdays. Saturdays, 9 A. M. to 12 M.

Bangor Public Library

ORGANIZATION AND FINANCES.

The Library is under the control of a Board of Managers, including the five Trustees of the Hersey Fund (the Mayor and City Treasurer ex-officio and three members elected by the City Council) and four representatives of the Bangor Mechanic Association (its President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer).

The resources of the Library consist of the Mechanic Association Fund of \$12,000 (yielding a fixed income of \$720); the Hersey Fund of \$100,000 (yielding a fixed income of \$4,000); the Patten Fund of \$6,000; the Luther H. Peirce Fund of \$75,000; the Hill Fund of \$534,000; the Stodder Fund of \$36,000; an annual city appropriation

amounting this year to \$18,500; and the State of Maine grant of \$200 to \$500 annually. The income of the Patten, Hill and Stodder Funds and the State of Maine grant are definitely assigned to books.

LIBRARY STAFF AND SERVICE.

The present Library staff comprises in addition to the Librarian, thirteen assistants and three substitutes serving temporarily as assistants. There are also four girls who work part time.

The building is open for readers and borrowers every day, except Sundays and legal holidays, from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M. On Sundays during November—March the adult department is open from 2 P. M. to 6 P. M.

The Library maintains a Music Branch at Symphony House, 166 Union Street, for the circulation to the general public of music and books about music. An assistant is in attendance there from 9 A. M. to 12 M. and from 2 P. M. to 5 P. M. except on Saturdays, when the hours are 9 A. M. to 12 M. The Branch is closed during the month of August.

HISTORY.

The Bangor Public Library dates from 1883. In that year the City, coming into possession of the Samuel F. Hersey bequest of \$100,000 for public education, voted to use it for library purposes and appointed five trustees to administer the fund. These trustees entered into an agreement with the Bangor Mechanic Association which had for many years maintained a library for its members and in 1874 had absorbed another library, collected by the Bangor Mercantile Association. Under the terms of this agreement the Mechanic Association transferred to the City its collection of nearly 20,000 volumes and the income of an endowment fund of \$12,000; electing four representatives to serve with the five Hersey trustees as the "Board of Managers of the Bangor Public Library."

The Library's home was in rented quarters on the second and third floors of the four-story building known as the Kenduskeag block, on the south side of State Street adjoining Kenduskeag Stream (the site now

occupied by the Bangor Savings Bank and the adjacent Kenduskeag building).

The Patten Fund of \$4,000 was received from the widow of J. F. Patten in January, 1902. On January 1, 1905, the Library, which had previously exacted a small subscription from users, became entirely free.

The book collection, which had grown to over 70,000 bound volumes and 10,000 pamphlets, was destroyed in the great fire of April 30, 1911. On May 25, 1911, the administration and lending departments of the Library were reopened in two small rooms in the basement of the Penobscot County Court House, kindly placed at the Library's disposal by the County Commissioners, with a nucleus of 29 volumes rescued from the fire, 1330 returned by borrowers, 46 returned from bindery, and various gifts from individuals. These quarters were later expanded by the addition of two large rooms on the top floor of the Court House, for storage purposes; and two and a half years after the fire the collection numbered 20,000 volumes accessioned. The most notable

addition during this period was the library of the late General Charles Hamlin, about 4000 volumes, especially strong in History and Belles Lettres, purchased by the Board of Managers from the insurance fund received after the fire. Today, with heavy buying for nearly thirteen years, there are on the shelves accessioned and catalogued about 165,000 volumes.

Up to 1921—a period of nearly 40 years—the Library had had but three Librarians; Daniel Holman, 1883–1887, Mrs. Mary H. Curran, 1888–1913, and Charles A. Flagg, 1913–1920. Mrs. Curran was associate librarian with Mr. Flagg to the time of her death in 1917. Mr. Flagg died in March, 1920. Elmar T. Boyd became Librarian, January 1, 1921.

THE BUILDING.

The organized movement for a separate building had its inception in April, 1893, when the Board of Managers incorporated under state law for the purpose of acquiring and holding real estate, as “The Trustees

of the Bangor Public Library." A building fund was gradually accumulated; the treasurer reporting \$10,615 in October, 1893, \$89,350 in June, 1902, and \$151,867 in January, 1911; all subscribed by present or former residents of Bangor.

After various sites had been considered and tentative arrangements made, the lot on the east side of Harlow Street, corner of Spring (nearly coincident with that occupied by the High School) was given by the City, in April, 1910. Following the destruction of the old High School in the great fire a year later, the City acquired the title to land south as far as Center Street, and it was determined to place both High School and Library on the enlarged lot.

Peabody and Stearns, of Boston, were chosen as architects of the Library building, and George H. Wilbur and Son, of Old Town, as the builders. The corner stone was laid June 18, 1912.

Just as the structure neared completion the Currier bequest of some \$15,000 became available, making good some shrinkage in

securities and enabling the Trustees to carry out their plans on substantially the original lines at a cost of \$160,000, without a single cent of expense to the City.

The structure is fireproof and first class in every particular. It has a frontage of 134 feet on Harlow Street, and an extreme depth of 103 feet from street entrance to rear of stack room. The main building has three floors, the main floor being five steps above the front entrance. On entering one faces the Delivery space with Children's Reading Room on the right and Main Reading Room on the left. Back of the Children's Reading Room is the Children's entrance and book room, and back of the Main Reading Room is the Reference Room; these two rooms flanking the Delivery hall. In the rear of the two rooms last named and opening into the passage behind the Delivery Desk are the Librarian's office and the Cataloguing Room, while directly in the rear of the Delivery Desk is the separate fireproof stack building. This is arranged for four floors of steel shelving. At pres-

ent the main floor, the floor above and about nine-tenths of the basement floor of the stack building are shelved, furnishing a book capacity of about 200,000 volumes. The stack used is the Snead, similar to that installed in the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library and many other important American libraries.

The second floor of the main building contains the Upper Hall, the Historical and Fine Arts Room and the Lecture Hall. In the basement there are the Board of Manager's Room, rooms for the extension and binding departments, coat and lunch rooms for employees, packing and shipping rooms, public toilet rooms, a study room, storage rooms, a disinfecting room, etc.

LATER HISTORY AND PRESENT PROBLEMS.

In 1934, the Library finds itself facing the pressing need for more room. The astonishing fact that a library building, constructed on a generous and even lavish scale in 1913, in a small city of less than 30,000 in-

habitants, should be outgrown in 1934 requires explanation. The explanation lies in the large endowments which have come to the Library within this period. In 1915 the Library was bequeathed \$75,000 by the will of Luther H. Peirce. Frederick W. Hill, who died in 1920, made the Library one of his residuary legatees. From this estate, the Treasurer now holds \$534,000. In 1925 the Trustees received and accepted from the Estate of George T. Stodder the sum of \$36,000. In 1927 the Patten Fund was increased by the will of Dr. T. U. Coe from \$4000 to \$6000. The income of all of these bequests except the Peirce Fund must be used for books.

So the purchase of books increased by leaps and bounds—nearly 10,000 were bought last year. The people heard about these books—our publicity told them—and business immediately began to increase. The work at the desks, the work in the Reference Room, the classification and cataloging of books, the publicity work, office work, expert help in choice of books, the

work of book purchase, all increased. The circulation or home use of books in 1933 was nearly four times that of 1920. This represents fairly the general increase in work. All of these things are excellent but they indicate very unusual expansion. So it is that every department is crowded. This is especially apparent in the Children's room and in the lack of space for display of adult non-fiction. The Board of Managers is fully awake to this situation and has ready preliminary plans for a rearrangement of the building and the addition of a new wing.

THE BOOKS.

The collection is classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classification, with certain modifications.

Most of the books are housed in the stack building in the rear, to which the only entrance is back of the Delivery Desk. The theory on which such a building is based—the maximum storage capacity consistent with administration—precludes the possibility of general public access to the shelves.

On the open shelves outside the stack building are many of the 10,000 books of the Juvenile Department, about 1200 books for the Reference Department and about 1400 books of the general adult collection both fiction and non-fiction. This adult collection on open shelves includes all recent fiction, the most recent non-fiction and collections, changed frequently, of non-fiction arranged by class, special collections for high school students, for teachers, reading-with-a-purpose courses, unusually popular books just off reserve, etc., etc. Yet our display of books on open shelves is entirely inadequate.

Hundreds of standard reference books are, because of lack of shelving space, placed in the stack building, unavailable for quick use; several hundred books belonging to the Juvenile Department are likewise kept at a great distance from the rest of this collection, inaccessible to the children and practically useless in the rush period; and our large collection of live adult books demands that there should be available on

open shelves at least 20,000 more of the best of these books that selection may be easier and more intelligently made. All of these conditions speak loudly of the need for an addition to the building.

The card catalog is excellent in every respect, complete, up-to-date, with author, title and subject entries, designed for use by both staff and public. Yet it is evident that a public library desiring to serve fully the general public must bring books to people and not catalogues, or rather must bring both.

HOME USE OF BOOKS

ADULT DEPARTMENT.

Because the Library's collection of books is so large, most generous privileges are extended to the public. Residents of Bangor, those who have a business address or go to school in Bangor, those who pay taxes to Bangor are entitled to free use of the Library. In addition residents of Orrington and of Glenburn, because their towns have entered into a contract with the Library, have full use of its books. Transients are cared for by payment of a deposit. Regis-

tration is easy. Applicants not known to attendants at the desk are required to show that their names are in the directory, or to present a reference who will vouch for their residence. One card good for three years is issued to each borrower. This card entitles its holder to two books of fiction and a reasonable number of books of non-fiction. Recent fiction is charged for seven days, most other books for four weeks, a few books of non-fiction in special demand for two weeks, magazines for one week. There are no renewals in the Adult Department. A fine of two cents a day is charged on each book overdue. Notices are sent seven days after the book or periodical becomes overdue, and a second notice seven days later. At any time after that a messenger may be sent for it and the cost charged to the borrower. The privilege of borrowing books is denied to those who have unpaid fines or other charges against them. For those who call for books that are in circulation, upon request, reserves will be made without charge, and a postal card notice will be sent when the book is ready. The Library wel-

comes the suggestion of worth while books for purchase.

THE JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

The entrance to this department is on the south side of the building. Its rooms contain most of the children's literature in the library. It is entirely separate from the main library and in charge of its own attendants. Its books are charged there when taken out, but are available to adults and to high school students also. Children are required to have permission to use the Adult Department. All juvenile books are listed in the main catalog; there is also a separate catalog of juvenile books for the use of the children and the Juvenile Staff. Books in this department are charged for two weeks and may be renewed once. Children under third grade are served by a card applied for by the mother. Older children make their own application which must be signed by the parent. A mother's card entitles the child to one book at a time; other juvenile cards, to two books. Vacation privileges allowing a longer time and more

books are granted in both Adult and Juvenile Departments.

MAIN READING ROOM. LIBRARY USE OF BOOKS.

The use of books and periodicals in the building itself is entirely free to residents and strangers. Unbound periodicals are found in the cases in the Reading Room, and newspapers are on the racks. The current number of many of these periodicals does not circulate, back numbers may be taken out as a book. Extra copies of many of the popular magazines are kept at the desk for circulation. Books may be drawn from the desk for use in the Reading Room. A much wider use of the Reading Room by adults is possible. There is a great wealth of newspapers and magazines here which is not used to capacity.

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT.

INFORMATION DESK.

The Reference Room is located between the Reading and Delivery Rooms. On its walls are shelved a selection of reference

books: dictionaries, atlases, encyclopedias, periodical and other indexes, etc., as far as shelving will allow. Other similar works are necessarily kept in the stacks and will be brought on request.

The Reference Librarian, or one of her assistants, is always on duty at the Information Desk in this room to answer or direct inquirers.

The Library intends to aid research in all ways in its power: by the preparation of lists; by the purchase of works needed; and by borrowing, where possible, on inter-library loans, books that it may find impossible or inadvisable to purchase. At the same time patrons who would not claim to be doing research work are invited to bring their inquiries, provided the answers are to be found in books, to this department. Guidance and direction will be given so far as the Library's resources allow. Questions over the telephone are welcomed. The Library's number is 2-0284.

EXTENSION DEPARTMENT.

The Extension Department was organized in 1923. Its original purpose was to place a small library in each school room in the City. It has expanded and grown since that time so that in 1933 it circulated over 70,000 books. Its agencies include all kindergartens; all grade school rooms, public, private and parochial; the Bangor High School Library, the John Bapst High School Library, the night school of the Americanization class; the Bangor Theological Seminary; the suburban schools of the City; various institutions and business and commercial houses, including Home for Aged Men, Home for Aged Women, King's Daughters Home, Good Samaritan Home, Eastern Maine General Hospital, Forest Avenue Church, Hammond Street Congregational Church, Eastern Manufacturing Company, Post Office, summer camps for Boy and Girl Scouts and "Y" boys and girls, St. Michael's Orphanage, Sanatorium, Penobscot County Law Library, and Central Fire Station.

The two major enterprises, where the services of a library worker are given, are the Forest Avenue Church, a station from which books are circulated to the people of the neighborhood, and the Eastern Maine General Hospital, where the services of a library attendant are given two afternoons of each week. Hospital library work is especially appreciated. The Extension Department has in a few years taken its place among the most important departments.

LIBRARY WORK A PUBLIC SERVICE.

If the word "Service" has not come by abuse to have lost its meaning, librarianship is a service. This is true of every worker from the Librarian to the newest substitute. Each one feels the obligation of service. All are giving true service whether or not their work brings them before the public. At each desk, Adult Circulation, Adult Reference, and Juvenile, a spirit of helpfulness prevails. Each one is striving to give the patron the help he needs to get the book or the information he desires. The Bangor Public Library exists only that it may serve the book needs of the Community.

Blueprints lost

1883 on State Street

fire April 30, 1911

Cormerstone June 18, 1912