Descriptive Summary

Title: State Library Records
Dates: 1861-1982
Collection number: F3616
Creator: State Library
Creator/Collector: Department of Finance, Division of Libraries
Creator/Collector: Department of Education, Division of Libraries
Collection Size: 40 cubic feet and 66 volumes
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California
Physical location: California State Archives
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], State Library Records, F3616:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition Information
The California State Archives acquired the State Library Records as required by state law.

Agency History
The roots of the State Library date to 1850 when a law was passed which provided that all books belonging to the state would be maintained by the Secretary of State (Stats. 1850, c. 69). In 1852 a library fund was established for making book purchases and a Board of Directors was created consisting of the Governor, Treasurer, Controller, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the Assembly (Stats. 1852, c. 5).

This arrangement continued until 1861 when the Library was placed under the control of a five-member Board of Trustees (Stats. 1861, c. 52). The Board was to consist of the Governor, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and three members at large. Elected by the Legislature, the latter three were to hold office for four years. The Political Code of 1872 modified this by specifying that five at large members were to be elected by the Legislature. In 1899 this was again changed when a law required members to be appointed by the Governor (Stats. 1899, c. 31).

The powers and duties of the Board of Trustees were transferred to the Dept. of Finance in 1921 (Stats. 1921, c. 603). A Division of Libraries, headed by the State Librarian, was created within the department. In 1927 this division was transferred to the Dept. of Education. The division designation was dropped in state publications in 1985 in favor of State
Library.
From at least the 1860s, the Library was divided into three departments: law, general, and miscellaneous. The General Department was not recognized as an administrative unit, but a loose organization of certain operations, including purchasing, accessioning, and cataloging as well as budgets and reports. By 1910 most of the functions usually associated with the Library, albeit under different names, had emerged, including Books for the Blind, California Section, Reference, Library Development Services, Government Publications, and Legislative Reference.
A Books for the Blind Division was first created in 1905 under the Extension Dept. When this department folded in 1911, a Books for the Blind Dept. emerged, becoming a section in 1931. The name changed to Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in 1969. In 1985 the program became the Braille and Talking Book Library.
Materials relating to California were first organized separately in 1898 as a Newspaper Dept. Four years later this evolved into a California Historical Dept. and then a California Dept. (1908). As is true with all departments, California became a section in 1931.
Reference services were early divided into two areas: reference provided for the Legislature and reference for state agencies. Legislative reference was first offered through the Sociological Dept. created in 1904. In 1910 the name changed to Legislative and Municipal Reference Dept. This organization lasted but a short time as the department was abolished in 1911. For the next six years the legislative reference function was handled by the Documents Dept. In 1917 a new Legislative Reference Dept. emerged becoming the Law and Legislative Reference Dept. in 1919. By the 1950s an Administrative and Legislative Reference Services unit had been formed. This became a section in 1965.
In 1903 a Dept. of Traveling Libraries was formed to handle agency demand for books and periodicals. This became a division in the Extension Dept. in 1905. By 1906 the Reference and Loan Dept. had been created which, in turn, became a Reference Dept. (1908), Reference Section (1931), and Reference Services (1981).
As early as 1905 the Library assumed responsibility for assisting local libraries throughout the state. In that year a Public Libraries Division was created in the Extension Dept. This became significant in 1909 when the County Free Library Law (Stats. 1909, c. 479) provided for the establishment of county library systems and placed supervision in the hands of the State Librarian. Though this law was repealed in part in 1911, the Library continued to provide assistance to public libraries. By the 1950s this task fell to Field Services and, in 1963, to Library Consultant Services. A Development Services was created in 1975 followed in 1981 by a Library Development Services Bureau.
Government publications were first managed by a Documents Dept. in 1909. This was combined with another program in 1911, but later emerged as the Government Documents Dept. in 1917 and a section in 1931. By the 1950s the name had been changed to Government Publications.
As noted above, a Law Dept. was created in the early 1860s. In 1919 it was merged with the Legislative Reference Dept. which became a section in 1931. By the 1950s this section had split into its two components and a Law Section was formed. The term Law Library seems to have appeared in state publications at least as early as 1962 when the Law Section became one of four operating bureaus.
A separate Catalog Dept. existed at least by 1904 and probably earlier. In that year the Library issued its first dictionary catalog using Library of Congress standards. The first printed catalog appeared in 1889 with the first card catalog showing up a year later. In 1981 the Catalog Section became the Cataloging Section.
As with cataloging, it is difficult to trace the creation of the Order Dept. Certainly, it existed by 1906 and likely much earlier. In 1960 the Order Section became the Acquisitions Section.
Other departments and functions have existed over the years. By the late 1920s both a Periodicals and Prints Department existed. The Periodicals Section was subsumed by the Catalog Section in 1933, but reappeared as a separate entity in the 1950s. The Print Section became a Prints and Exhibits Section in the 1950s. A Book Repair Section was created sometime in the 1940s and was abolished in 1975. In 1982 this function became a part of the Preservation Office. The Sutro Library in San Francisco dates to 1913 when the original gift was accepted by the Board of Trustees. The Sutro opened for business in 1917 and has moved several times over the years.
Many of the changes in the Library’s internal organization over time may be traced to the increasing use of administrative layers reflecting growth in programs. When the Library became too large to be directly supervised by the State Librarian and Assistant, other administrative positions were created. When this first occurred is hard to pinpoint, but certainly by the 1920s the departments had heads or chiefs which later became known as Supervising Librarians. In turn, by the 1950s, various sections were grouped together and supervised by Principal Librarians. The State Librarian has always been appointed directly by the Governor, but since 1927 has functioned as a Division Chief in the Dept. of Education.
Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

Inventory of the California State Library Records
folder F3616:1-4 Series 1 Registers of Books Loaned. (Record of Books) 1865-1868 1887-1894
Physical Description: 4 volumes
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by department and then chronologically by loan date or alphabetically by name of agency.
Scope and Content
Records of books loaned by the State Library to state officials and agencies and the general public. The earliest volume related only to loans to legislative committees and includes borrowers' name and publication title. The next two volumes contain information about books loaned from the General Dept. which included the general collections. The information is arranged by name of agency. The second volume has an index on the inside front cover providing names of agencies and page references. Categories for clergymen, physicians, and lawyers are included at the bottom of this index. Entries include loan and return dates, name of borrower, register and receipt numbers, and author and title of book. An alphabetical index of borrowers' names may be found at the beginning of the register. The last volume contains the same entry information, but is arranged chronologically by loan date and reflects materials borrowed from the Law Dept. An alphabetical index of borrowers' names is included at the beginning of the register.

folder F3616:5-6 Series 2 Book Registers (Records) 1870s-1880s
Physical Description: 2 volumes
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by category and then alphabetically by author.
Scope and Content Note
Records of books available in the State Library. The first volume contains books from the Law Dept. Entries include book number, author and title of book and number of volumes. Law books are further divided by category e.g. law treaties, state and U.S. documents. The second volume reflects books from the general collection and, in addition to the above data, includes an alphabetical index indicating where letters begin with corresponding page number.

folder F3616:7-22 Series 3 Registers of Books Accessioned 1861-1917
Physical Description: 17 volumes
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of accession and then numerically by book number.
Scope and Content Note
Records of accessioned publications added to the State Library. The earliest volume contains information relating only to the Law Dept. arranged alphabetically by state and then other categories. Entries include date received and title of publication. Later volumes contain the additional following information: book number, number of volumes, name of author, place of publication, name of publisher, type of binding, cost, and remarks e.g. donation, exchange, lost.
Series 4 Book Orders 1914-1940

Physical Description: 40 volumes
Arrangement
Arranged numerically by order number.
Scope and Content Note
Records of books ordered by the Library. Information includes date of ordering, name and address of publisher, order number, author and title of publication, cost, and remarks e.g. cancelled, withdrawn, lost.

Series 5 Miscellaneous Index undated

Physical Description: 1 volume
Arrangement
Arranged by category.
Scope and Content Note
An index to books in the general collection. Information includes author and title of book and number of volumes. The volume includes a printed index at the beginning which provides name of category e.g. natural history, romance, and page references.

Series 6 Register of Missing Newspapers 1901

Physical Description: 1 volume
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by name of newspaper.
Scope and Content Note
Appears to be a record of issues missing from the Library's newspaper collection. Information includes name of newspaper, and year and date of missing issue(s).

Series 7 Schedules of Bills Filed 1925-1931

Physical Description: 1 volume
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of schedule.
Scope and Content Note
A financial reporting of expenses for the Library. Information includes schedule and item numbers, month and year of posting, name of payee, object, amount, check number, program charged, and balances. Also contains payroll information which, in addition to above data, includes occupation, name of payee, salary, and time employed.

Series 8 Invoices 1870-1877

Physical Description: 6 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.
Scope and Content Note
Invoices received from businesses for goods and services purchased by the State Library. Information includes name and address of business, date of voucher/invoice, terms of payment, description of goods or services purchased, and costs.

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Physical Description: 2 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.
Scope and Content Note
Fire insurance policies taken out by State Library to insure books and other materials. Information includes name and address of insurance company, text of policy, items covered by policy, insured amounts, premium received, and dates of coverage.

Series 10 Administrative Correspondence 1870-1920 1955-1982

Physical Description: 18 volumes and 356 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically and alphabetically thereafter by correspondent.
Scope and Content Note
Administrative correspondence to and from the State Library relating to a wide variety of topics and programs. Most of the material resulted from the activities and interests of the State Librarian and other high-ranking administrators. These files include not only correspondence, but also memoranda, studies, reports, clippings, and printed materials. Due to the large volume of the series, correspondence was sampled. Beginning in 1890, with few exceptions, only the following letters of the alphabet were retained: C, H, N, S, and W. Research Note: For anyone interested in the growth and development of the State Library, these files form a rich nucleus of research material. Especially notable is information about the Library's divisions, activities of the State Librarian, and maintenance of physical facilities.

Series 11 Annual Reports 1946-1972

Physical Description: 4 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by year.
Scope and Content Note
Annual reports filed by sections within the State Library. The reports, largely statistical, but also containing some narration, include information relating to reference service, personnel, special projects, and physical facilities. Report formats vary by section.


Physical Description: 93 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by month and year.
Scope and Content Note
Monthly reports filed by sections within the State Library. The reports, largely statistical in nature, but also containing some narration, include information relating to reference service, personnel, special projects, and physical facilities. Report formats vary by section.

Series 13 History Files 1898 1918-1936 1942-1957 1962-1972

Physical Description: 3 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of item.
Scope and Content Note
An assortment of documents relating to significant events, programs, or people. Included are black and white photographs (ca. 1914) received from the State Conservation Commission, annual reports, reports from the State Librarian to the Trustees, outlines of curriculum for the State Library school, statements about the Library's activities and functions, historical information about Library sections, book acquisition policy (1962), and reports on the California Library Network.
Series 14 Sutro Library Files 1913-1960

Physical Description: 87 file folders

Arrangement
Arranged by type of record and then chronologically or alphabetically by name of correspondent.

Scope and Content Note
Records of the Sutro Library, a division of the State Library. The files are organized into three sub-series: correspondence, 1917-1948; monthly reports, 1917-1944; and administrative files, 1913-1960.

The correspondence includes letters received from and sent to patrons and the State Library, reflecting a wide range of Sutro activities. One prominent subject is the search for suitable facilities. Additional correspondence relating to the Sutro may be found in Administrative Correspondence, series #10.

Monthly reports are largely statistical in nature and somewhat duplicative, though not entirely so, of Sutro information found in series #12, Monthly Reports.

Included in the administrative files are records relating to the transfer of the Sutro collection to the State, minutes of the Board of Trustees of the State Library, court documents concerning litigation between the State and Sutro heirs, opinions of the State Attorney General, information on the development of the Sutro Library, and the search for proper facilities for the Sutro.

Research Note: Without question, these files contain the most complete information about the acquisition, history, and development of the Sutro Library.

Series 15 California Section Correspondence 1909-1916

Physical Description: 13 file folders

Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of filing and then alphabetically by correspondent.

Scope and Content Note
Correspondence of the California Section to and from patrons. Because of the volume of material present, only correspondence filed under the following letters of the alphabet has been retained: C, H, N, S, and W.

Series 16 Law Section Correspondence 1911-1916

Physical Description: 10 file folders

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Scope and Content Note
Correspondence of the Law Section to and from patrons. Because of the volume of material present, only correspondence filed under the following letters of the alphabet has been retained: C, H, N, S, and W.

Series 17 American Library Association Files 1919-1920 1942 1958-1972

Physical Description: 31 file folders

Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of material.

Scope and Content Note
Records of the State Library's relationship with the American Library Association. Largely consists of correspondence, but also includes memoranda, studies, reports, and publicity materials. Prominent topics include library services offered during World War I, adoption and promotion of the Enlarged Program, and professional standards.
Series 18 California Library Association Files 1904-1905 1935-1969

Folder F3616:689-704

Series 18 California Library Association Files 1904-1905 1935-1969

Physical Description: 16 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of material.
Scope and Content Note
Records of the State Library's involvement in the California Library Association. Largely consists of correspondence, but also includes memoranda, studies, reports, and publicity materials. Prominent topics include library funding, library legislation, and promotion of the Enlarged Program.

Folder F3616:705-756

Series 19 County Library Files 1904-1958

Physical Description: 52 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged by type of record and then chronologically by date or alphabetically by county name.
Scope and Content Note
Records relating to the State Library's relationship with county libraries throughout the state. The files are organized into two sub-series: administrative records, 1907-1936; and correspondence, 1906-1920.

The administrative records focus on conditions within county libraries, salaries, and laws affecting the establishment and organization of county libraries.

Correspondence is to and from county libraries and largely centers on efforts to create county libraries throughout the state. Because of the volume of material present, the correspondence has been sampled. Only correspondence with the following counties has been retained with the exception of three folders, 1915-1919, at the end of the series which reflects activities statewide: Alameda, Amador, Fresno, Humboldt, Lassen, Marin, Monterey, Riverside, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara.

Research Note: Perhaps the most significant development in California library history has been the creation and development of county free library systems. This effort, to a large degree, was spearheaded by the State Library, in particular, by State Librarian James Gillis. This series contains essential information for a study of local conditions and political forces that shaped county libraries statewide.

Folder F3616:757-758

Series 20 California County Library Association Minutes 1929-1952

Physical Description: 2 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of meeting.
Scope and Content Note
Minutes of the California County Library Association. Includes minutes, correspondence, and reports relating principally to the Association's annual convention. Contains some information about local conditions in county libraries.
Series 21 Library Organizer's Files 1905-1910 1916-1920

Physical Description: 12 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged by type of material and then chronologically by date of record.
Scope and Content Note
Records of the State Library's field staff. The library organizers' primary purpose was to assist local communities in establishing and managing libraries. The files are organized into two sub-series: monthly reports, 1905-1908; and correspondence of the organizers, Mabel Prentiss, 1905-1908, Bertha Kumli, 1905-1910, May Henshall, 1916-1920, and Harriet Eddy, 1916-1920.
The monthly reports contain a detailed summary of the organizer's activities, including places visited, names of contacts made, and recommendations for further action.
The correspondence includes letters to and from the organizers and covers much of the same information found in the monthly reports, although in a less formal manner.
For additional information about the State Library's work in local communities, see series #22, Field Reports.
Research Note: Under the direction of State Librarian James Gillis and his successors, the State Library actively encouraged the creation of county free libraries throughout the state. To a large degree, this work was carried out by the Library Organizers. This series provides prime documentation about the development of local libraries, local conditions and attitudes, and the remarkable activities of the Library Organizers.

Series 22 Field Reports 1937-1964 1972

Physical Description: 13 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of report.
Scope and Content Note
Reports of the State Library's field representatives relating to library work in local communities. The field representatives were the successors to the library organizers and, as such, the field reports are a continuation of series #21, Library Organizer's Files.
Early field reports contain little detailed information and generally include only lists of places visited, tours given, people interviewed etc. Later reports are narrative in style with more information available. These reports were filed for each visit completed.

Series 23 Applications for County Librarian 1911-1933 1940 1957-1958 1964

Physical Description: 16 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by name of applicant and then chronologically by date of application.
Scope and Content Note
Applications by individuals desiring appointment to position of county librarian. Under California's county free library law, no person was eligible to be appointed a county librarian without first receiving a certificate from the Board of Library Examiners. The Board would periodically conduct examinations in the state to determine those who should receive certification. In order to qualify for the examination, one first submitted the application.
The applications contain a wealth of information about the applicants, including name, address, occupation, date and place of birth, marital status, health status, school attendance, library education and experience, salary history, and names of references. Also included are certificates of health from personal physicians, correspondence, the examination questions and answers, final tabulation by Board members, and, often, photographs of the applicant.
Series 24 Home Teacher for the Blind Files 1916-1926 1930-1953

folder F3616:798-819  Series 24  Home Teacher for the Blind Files 1916-1926 1930-1953
Physical Description: 22 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged by type of record and then chronologically by date of material.
Scope and Content Note
Records of the State Library's field workers engaged in teaching basic skills, principally reading, to the blind. The files are organized into three sub-series: correspondence to and from field staff - Kate Foley, 1916-1924, Catherine Morrison, 1917-1924, and Juliet Bindt, 1950-1953; annual reports, 1920-1926, 1930-1950; and correspondence of the Coordinating Committee on State Services for the Blind, 1946-1951.
The correspondence includes monthly reports summarizing the activities of the field staff and provides information about teaching methodology, books requested, names of people assisted, and visits and talks made.
The annual reports are largely narrative in style and contain much the same information, in less detail, as the correspondence, but also include statistics on number of people in classes, total lessons given, letters written and received, visits and talks made, and telephone calls.
The Coordinating Committee file, consisting mainly of Committee minutes, includes information on legislation affecting the blind and activities and programs offered by the state.
Research Note: These files are an important source of information about state government's work with the blind. Through the efforts of the field staff, the State Library developed programs to teach reading to the blind at a time when little work was being done in this area. Of particular note is the life and work of Kate Foley who gained national recognition for her efforts.

folder F3616:820-822  Series 25  Newsletters 1951-1967
Physical Description: 3 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of newsletter.
Scope and Content Note
Newsletter from the State Librarian to libraries throughout the state. Originally the newsletter was designed to replace the Monthly Letter to County Librarians (1938-1951), but, over time, expanded to include information of general interest to the California library community. Regular features include information on legislation, new library buildings, personnel changes, special programs, and educational opportunities.

folder F3616:823  Series 26  Library Trustee's Correspondence 1918-1921
Physical Description: 1 file folder
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of material.
Scope and Content Note
Records of the State Board of Library Trustees. The records, largely correspondence, but also containing some reports, principally include letters to and from the State Librarian and Board members. Significant topics include construction of a new State Library building and library activities during World War I.