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The Law Library

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The Law Library

IT has been thought that a brief sketch of the library of the law department which should furnish information as to its present condition and of the more important of the incidents of its history would be of sufficient general interest to warrant its publication in the ALUMNUS, and I have been requested to prepare such an article.

In the language of Professor B. M. Thompson, a student in the first law class, when the law school opened in 1859, "the law library occupied a room covering what is at present the east half of Major Soule's office," in the south wing of what is now known as University Hall. It "contained about three hundred and fifty volumes and included the Michigan Reports, some ten volumes, the New York Common Law and Chancery Reports, the Pennsylvania Reports, and the reports of some of the New England states. The library room was furnished with a rough deal table, and a few wooden chairs, and was heated with a box stove." The catalogue of 1861 contains the statement, which smacks a bit of the promoter, that "a well selected and very useful law library has been purchased and arranged for the use of the students." In view of the statements in President Angell's letter to Christian H. Buhl, of February 10, 1885, nearly a quarter of a century later, that, "there are thirty states and territories which are absolutely unrepresented by a single vol-

ume of reports"; that, "the Canadian Reports and the Irish Reports are wanting, and our English Reports and United States Circuit Reports are very defective"; that, "more text-books are also needed"; and that "many other serious wants might be specified," the "arrangement" of that law library of 1861 must have been a most serious task.

In 1866 the Hon. Richard Fletcher, of Boston, presented the library with eight hundred volumes of reports and text-books, a most generous donation, from one not having even the obligation of citizenship among us; and it helped to satisfy a serious need. This minute is from the record of the board of regents: "The law library has been enlarged by a liberal donation by the Hon. Richard Fletcher, of Boston. In response to the gratifying recognition of the usefulness of the University by one in a distant state, and in recognition of the eminent ability of the donor, the fourth professorship in the department of law has been designated the Fletcher Professorship." Judge Fletcher wrote in reply to notification of this action: "It affords me pleasure to know that the books which I collected in the course of a long professional life, will not be scattered, but will remain together for the use of the students in the law department of the great university of the Northwest."

This minute from the record brings to mind that the writer has heard the suggestion made that there are other

names, associated with the department of law, honorable enough to be worthy of similar distinction.

The data for tracing the growth of the library in its earlier years are not very adequate. Librarian Davis's report for 1883-4, contains the statement that "the law library has never been counted with the general library and now contains four thousand five hundred volumes." No substantial additions were made after this till 1885. Under date of February 9, 1885, Mr. Christian H. Buhl, then of Detroit, wrote President Angell as follows:—

DEAR SIR:—I learn from Mr. Jas. F. Joy, that the law library of the University is somewhat incomplete, and that additions thereto, especially in the way of reports, are desirable and necessary. I have a law library of about five thousand volumes, principally reports, which I propose to give to the University if it will be of use. Should it be thought best to accept these books, delivery can be made at once.

Very respectfully,

C. H. BUHL.

This gift, as President Angell in reply says, more than doubled the size of the library. Through a bequest of this same generous friend there came to the University in 1895, \$10,000 to be used in the purchase of books for the law library. Through the purchases made with this fund the more glaring of the deficiencies in the library were filled, and the librarian was able to say in 1896, that the library contained practically complete sets of the reports of the courts of last resort of all the states, both the supreme and inferior federal courts, and also the English, Scotch, Irish, Canadian, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia Reports. so nearly complete as to serve exceedingly well for the every day use of the library.

In the year 1898 the widow of the late Judge Samuel T. Douglass, of Grosse Isle, carrying out the expressed wish of Judge Douglass, presented to the University the law library of her late husband. By this gift the library was enriched by some eight hundred volumes, many of which were duplicates of books we already had, but with our great body of students constantly using the library, duplicates of

many of the sets of reports are very much desired.

In 1900, Mr. John Q. A. Sessions, of the class of '56, of Ann Arbor, gave to the library a practically complete set of the session laws of Michigan, covering the period from 1837 to 1895, together with a few other volumes of value.

In 1901, the Hon. Oliver H. Dean, of the class of '68, '70/, of Kansas City, Mo., presented to the library 154 volumes of the reports of the New York court of appeals. Others who have the needs of the department constantly in mind have from time to time given substantial recognition of the fact in sending occasional volumes to the library. Among such are the Hon. Edwin F. Conely, late of Detroit, and Judge Henry H. Swan, also of Detroit. The children of Judge Cooley have, in memory of their father and his long connection with the department of law, generously given a collection of books from his library.

These benefactions of thoughtful friends of the University with the appropriations made from year to year by the board of regents, have enabled the department to gather a collection of more than 20,000 volumes, over 17,500 of which may be said to be in constant use. The remaining 2500 are documents of the federal and state governments, broken sets, and the like.

While the library serves fairly well the daily needs of our department, it is far from complete, and one at all familiar with it is sure to note excellent opportunities still to expend money in its extension. The expenditure necessary to keep up the current sets of reports and periodicals now owned, is not less than \$1,000 per year, and when to this ever increasing expense is added the also ever increasing cost of the purchase of text-books, the binding and the repair of books, and the other expenses naturally incident to the carrying on of so large a library, it is apparent that to maintain

even its present state of efficiency, a large item must go into the annual budget.

But in making note of the gifts to the library, mention must not be omitted of friends who have remembered the department in gifts, which will serve to keep fresh memories ever to be its priceless possession. In 1887, Albert D. Elliott, of the law class of that year, presented to the department a most excellent portrait in oil of Judge Cooley, which hangs in the library. A fine portrait of Judge James V. Campbell, presented by Clarence M. Burton, '73, of Detroit, hangs beside that of Judge Cooley. The following named classes of the department have presented portraits in oil of professors:—

The class of '91 presented the portrait of Professor Wells; the class of '96, that of Professor Knowlton; the class of '98, that of Professor Griffin; the class of '99, that of Professor Mechem; the class of '00, that of Professor Thompson; the class of '01 that of Professor Hutchins, and the class of '02, that of Professor Kirchner. The portrait of Professor Johnson was the gift of students in the department when he left in 1901. The portrait of Professor Charles I. Walker was presented by Detroit alumni, and that of Professor Charles A. Kent by his family. A portrait of Mr. Buhl looks down upon us as we enter the library which owes so much to him. At the time of his gift, the law students asked him to sit for his portrait. He replied characteristically that if they wished his picture, they should have it but he would pay for it himself. A bust of Judge Cooley, in bronze, presented by the class of '95; and one in plaster, of Professor Wells, presented by his sister, are also objects of interest to those visiting the library. The library is fortunate in possessing an engraving of its first substantial benefactor, the Hon. Richard Fletcher. The class of '99, also, left a fund with which has been

purchased etched portraits of Joseph Choate, Rufus Choate, James B. Carter, John Marshall, and Lemuel Shaw, these last having being most beautifully framed through the generosity of the Hargreaves Mfg. Co., of Detroit.

The Hon. Andrew D. White left us facsimilies of the warrant for the execution of Charles I., and of Magna Charta, which were framed by the class of '63. There are several other pictures of less pretension than some mentioned, but of real interest, the donors of which I am unable to discover, and in one case an old student prefers not to be discovered.

As I write, I am informed that a friend has given a portrait of that eminent lawyer and friend of the University, James B. Dill, of New York City.

The library left its quarters and deal table in the old south wing, on the completion of the law building in 1862. It was sheltered on the second floor of that building till the completion of the present general library building, in 1883, when on the removal of the general library from the lower floor of the law building, the law library took its place, and there remained till the completion of the present beautiful library room in 1898. The present room is 65 x 85 feet in size, with high roof; it is well lighted. There is a student's consultation room, and a professors' study room, opening off the main room.

While experience usually suggests some desirable changes in any particular arrangement, still it must now be said that the library accommodations, so far as room is concerned are excellent.

This sketch would lack something if a word were not spoken of those who have served as officials in the library. To quote Professor Thompson, again: "The first law librarian was a raw youth who came to work his way through the department, Isaac Marston, of the class of '61,"

afterward a justice of the supreme court of Michigan. The records at hand do not avail to trace the personnel of the library force from that day, but among those who have served there was another youth, ambitious, and willing to work to gratify his ambition, the Hon. William R. Day, now a justice of the supreme court of the United States. Regent Levi L. Barbour served his apprenticeship in the old library, in 1864, as the record discloses, as did also Professor Joseph B. Steere, and that old and tried servant and friend of the University, Joseph Vance, took charge of

the library in 1883, and continued his service in the place he loved, and among the students he loved, till his death, December 23, 1900, remembered, I had said, by as many student friends as any servant the University ever had. Since Mr. Vance's death, Miss Gertrude E. Woodard, a practical and trained librarian, has, under the personal supervision of a member of the law faculty appointed for that purpose, had immediate charge of the library, and I think it may be said that the library was never better serving the student body.

Victor H. Lane, '74e, '78l
Ann Arbor