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Florida State University Libraries

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Florida Library History Project

Florida State University Libraries

The 1900 catalog of the Florida State College for Women (now FSU) stated that the Library had a carefully selected Reference Library. Apparently, there was no such position as librarian. In 1903 Mary Aphthorp, assistant in Greek and German, became librarian while continuing her work as a teacher. She held this position until 1912. She was succeeded by Frances Newman, the first trained librarian of the College. After the Fall of 1913, Miss Newman was succeeded by the following trained librarians: Isabel Davidson, 1913-1916; Susan C. Lancaster, 1917-1919; Louise Richardson, 1919-1920; Ruth Woolman, 1920-1922. Louise Richardson returned as librarian in 1922 and served as head until July, 1953. She was succeeded by Norman Kilpatrick, 1953-1957, and Florence Bethea who was Acting Director for an interim of six months. N. Orwin Rush was the Director from 1958-1973. Charles E. Miller became Director July, 1973.

Until 1924, the Library was housed in one large room in the Administration Building, now known as Westcott. In the Fall of 1919, there were approximately 10,000 volumes and 100 periodicals in the Library. The staff consisted of one librarian and one student assistant. The Library hours were 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., except when closed on Sunday and for lunch and dinner each day. By June, 1924, there were 18,133 books in the library and a staff of four, including two student assistants. The west wing of a new Library (now Dodd Hall) had been built and was in use, but unfortunately, it was outgrown before the Library was moved into it. June 1930 showed the Library as having 36,350 volumes and receiving 350 periodicals and 37 newspapers. There was a staff of ten librarians and fourteen student assistants. In the same year the Library building was completed by the addition of a central wing and stack wing of five stories.

The next sixteen years, 1930-1946, record a remarkable growth for the Library. At the close of this period there was a staff of 22 librarians and 24 student assistants, and a collection of 107,429 volumes and 33,867 documents. Subscriptions to almost 600 periodicals and 68 newspapers were received.

The Library moved into the present building, the Robert Manning Strozier

Library, in June, 1956 and expanded into the new addition in September, 1967. The Library was dedicated on November 9, 1956, and in 1961 was named for the late FSU President, Robert Manning Strozier. The Warren P. Allen Music Library was built in 1979, the Harold Goldstein Library Science Library in 1981, and the Paul A. M. Dirac Science Library in 1988. In late summer 1994 the Technical Services Division was relocated to a location at the South end of the campus as the first stage in the planned renovation of Strozier Library. The renovation of the main building of Strozier Library began shortly after this and was complete in 1997.

In 1982 the main library reading room (east wing) of Dodd Hall was renovated and the Claude and Mildred Pepper was housed there until 1998. Claude Pepper and Mildred Pepper were former residents of Tallahassee. Claude Pepper served for many years in the state legislature and in both houses of the U.S. Congress. Construction of a new Pepper Center began at the end of 1995 and was completed early in 1998. The Pepper Library is now located in this building.

The collection now totals 2,200,000 volumes, over 15,000 current subscription, 4,640,000 microforms, and 495,000 government documents. The staff includes 48 librarians and 121 University Support Personnel System employees. The Library is open 109 hours per week. Between semesters hours are reduced, and schedules vary for holidays.

March 23, 1998