

LAWRENCE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Lawrence, Kansas

Report To The Board of Directors for 1966

To The Board of Directors:

To use a currently popular term, 1966 provided a year of 'happenings' for the library. Book circulation was down, but our number of registered borrowers went up. Our book collection increased by 3,059, but more controversy arose over one title which was not accepted than all of the 4,500 which were added to the collection during the year. Art displays, films, new methods of interlibrary book borrowing and a well-received program of book service to shut-ins provided the growth and 'reaching-out' needed to keep library service abreast of the times. In addition, the library assumed a new role as administrative center in the emerging Northeast Kansas Library System. In all, it was a year of variety and, we hope, progress.

Turning to the tangible ways of measuring library service, our total book circulation decreased approximately 1% or 3,512 during the year. Total book circulation for the year was 297,832. A departmental breakdown of circulation indicates an increase in circulation of 7,280 adult books as opposed to a decline in circulation of children's books of 10,792. Several factors may account for the decrease. First, the children's Department increased its loan period to three weeks late in 1965. The effects felt from a decreased turnover of books due to the increased loan period plus the discontinuing of renewals was felt well into 1966. On the other hand, the resultant slump in adult circulation because of the same factors was over by the Spring of 1966. Secondly, the increased tempo of activity in elementary school libraries has likely affected public library use and may continue to do so in the near future. We feel, however, that increased effectiveness of school libraries can only serve to strengthen public library use in the long run. The third factor is more general. A trend of decreased circulation of children's books seems to be emerging over the country. A recent survey in Library Journal would indicate that a plateau has been reached, temporarily at least, in the use of children's books in numerous public libraries throughout the country. An exact reason for this slump seems not to have been found yet.

On the plus side, both our registration and book stock showed an encouraging increase during the year. Total number of registered borrowers rose to 16,697, an increase of 1,625 patrons. Our book collection reached a new high of 60,288 by the end of the year, a net increase of 3,059 books. A survey of our book collection by the State Library in the Spring of 1966 indicated the excellent quality of the collection for its size, and suggested that attention be given to achieving more depth in certain areas of the collection. A follow-up along these lines is now taking place. A cautionary note was indicated by the revelation that, although our book budget had increased by 50% in the last 7 years, the percentage of published books we were able to purchase had steadily declined from 26% to 14%. This has been due to rising book prices and increased output of publishers. We must continue to increase our book budget if we are to keep pace. Hopefully, the growth of a library system will help to narrow this gap. A breakdown of our collection shows we have 21,256 children's books and 39,032 adult and young adult books.

New services for 1966 included a monthly art exhibit and introduction of circulating 8 mm silent films. The art exhibit began in August and changes each month. The

exhibit is located in the reference room and is sponsored by the Lawrence Art Guild. The displays have been well-received and the resultant publicity seems to have brought many new people to the library. We began the film service in October with a basic collection of 52 films. Subject matter includes historical, comedy, sports and film classics. During the three months of 1966 the service was available, circulation totaled 484. This represents a 300% turnover of the collection each month. The service has been popular with both individuals and groups.

Two relatively new services continued to show an increase in use during the year. The home delivery service and teletype interlibrary loan requests were introduced in November of 1965. Throughout the year, approximately 1,500 books were borrowed for our patrons through the Kansas Informational Circuit. Over one million books are now available to us through interlibrary loan from the six Kansas libraries participating in the service. By the end of 1966 we were bringing books to 28 persons by means of our home delivery service. During this period, 3,081 books and records were chosen and brought to persons who were physically unable to come to the library. Much of the credit for initiating the program and handling the book selection goes to Mrs. Taylor of our adult reference section. The weekly job of bringing the materials to our home delivery patrons was done through the volunteer efforts of Mrs. Mayo. Our thanks for a service well-done to both of them.

A more controversial topic arose when the library rejected a gift copy of a book on fluoridation from a local patron. Although much publicity resulted from this incident, the decision of the library was upheld. A word of appreciation is in order to the Library Board and the City Commissioners for their support in this matter.

Activities of the Children's Department continued to be popular during the year. 1,875 children participated in the Summer Reading Program. Of these, 1,470 completed the required reading and were eligible for a reading certificate. Friday preschool story hours continued their attraction. During the 22 sessions, a total of 1,227 children were in attendance, an average of more than 55 at each session. A special 1966 theme included a series of stories centered around animals, with live animals featured at each session. Dogs, cats, skunks and a tom turkey were among the varied guests of honor. The person most responsible for these excellent services and programs during the last seven years has been Miss Hilda Koehler, head of our Children's Department. We were sorry to lose her through retirement at the end of 1966. Her successor is Mrs. Louise Lester, a recent graduate of Oklahoma Library School, who was hired by the Board in late 1966, to begin her duties as of February, 1967.

A major change in the organization of our Adult Services Department took place near the end of 1966 with the addition of a fourth full time staff member. At this time, Mrs. Kim Meyer became head of the circulation section, assuming responsibilities for circulation procedures and the supervision of circulation personnel and pages. Mrs. Howard Taylor has assumed full time duties as Reference Librarian. In addition to her increased reference work with patrons, Mrs. Taylor will devote a portion of her time to working with schools and groups outside the library. Her efforts will also be directed at building the reference collection, the pamphlet files and the preparation of book lists and book selection aids on a monthly basis. The reference section answered 3,127 reference questions by telephone and in person for patrons during 1966.

The growing inadequacy of our physical facilities became more evident during the year. In March, the State Library presented a preliminary survey of Lawrence Library facilities to the Board. In essence, the survey stated that the building

was totally inadequate for a city the size of Lawrence and recommended that a new building be erected. This survey was reinforced later in 1966 when the local Citizens Committee on Public Buildings reported to the City Commissioners of the need for a new library building of 40,000 square feet at an estimated cost of \$1,250,000. It is hopeful that progress along these lines can be made in the near future. In addition to the acute shortage of reader space, as well as, book space, the increased cost of maintenance of the 63 year old building was illustrated when the book collection became endangered as a result of numerous leaks in the roof. The city has since installed a new roof, but threats of leakage at other areas as well as inadequate electrical and heating capacity continue to be a problem.

The largest turnover in recent years took place on the Library Board in 1966. Judge Charles Rankin, Board Chairman, retired after 8 years of service. In addition, Rev. Paul Davis and Mrs. Don Allen resigned due to change of residence. Replacing them were Skipper Williams, Clark Coan and Larry Flannery.

Special thanks again this year go to: Mrs. Osma, our Assistant Librarian and Head of Technical Services, for the excellent job of book selecting and of keeping the flow of materials available to our patrons; Mrs. Weeks, our bookkeeper and secretary, for the additional work she has assumed in handling the state grant for planning services and for her all-around helpfulness in the many tasks performed during the years; finally, to Jim Anthony, our custodian, who has done a remarkable job of making the library a clean and inviting place.

A major undertaking for the library last year was the assuming of responsibility as administrative headquarters for the Northeast Kansas Libraries, an informal federation of 30 public libraries in Northeast Kansas. Under a grant of \$36,000 from the State Library, the Lawrence Public Library is providing consultant services, rotating book collections, book funds and workshops for participating libraries. It is anticipated that this demonstration program will lead to the formation of a legal library system in Northeast Kansas by 1969. Such a system would operate with a tax levy of $\frac{1}{2}$ mill on areas not now taxed for library service. Services to existing libraries would be strengthened through such a federation and library service would be extended to an estimated 100,000 people now without library service in Northeast Kansas. A strong possibility exists that the Lawrence Public Library would become a major resource center for such a system in addition to becoming administrative center of many centralized services such as consultant services, cooperative film circuits, central acquisition of books, etc. Additional funds for the Lawrence Public Library under such a plan would provide increased book stocks, personnel and services to residents of Lawrence and Douglas County and eliminate the non-resident fees now charged to persons living outside of the city.

In summary, in spite of temporary slowdowns in some areas during the past year, the Library has continued to expand and extend its services within space and budget limitations. There are still many areas of service to be explored yet and many improvements to be made on our present services. With the continued support of the city and the Library Board and an excellent staff with which to work steady improvement will be assured.

Wayne Mayo
Head Librarian