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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HANDBOOK OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY ***

Transcriber's note

Minor punctuation errors have been changed without notice. In this version on pages [74-75](#) are diagrams of floor plans. Clicking on these images will show you larger versions.



**CENTRAL BUILDING
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY**

HANDBOOK

of

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

1916

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NOTE

Although the purpose of this Handbook is to tell the principal facts about the Library as an institution, its chief use is likely to be that of a guide to the Central Building. The section about the Central Building is therefore given first place. Any visitor who cares to take the trouble, before beginning his tour of the Building, to read the brief historical sketch (on pages [63-73](#)) will have a better understanding of the organization and work of the Library, and see the reasons for a number of things which might not otherwise be clear.

THE CENTRAL BUILDING

OPEN: WEEK DAYS, INCLUDING HOLIDAYS, 9 A.M. TO 10 P.M. SUNDAYS, 1 P.M. TO 10 P.M.
(Except where otherwise noted these are the hours of the special reading rooms.)

THE CENTRAL BUILDING

[7]

The Central Building of The New York Public Library is on the western side of Fifth Avenue, occupying the two blocks between 40th and 42nd Streets. It stands on part of the site of the old Croton distributing reservoir, and it was built by the City of New York at a cost of about nine million dollars.

Competitions to choose the architect for the building were held in 1897, two years after The New York Public Library was incorporated. The result of the competition was the selection of Messrs. Carrère and Hastings, of New York, as architects. In 1899 the work of removing the old reservoir began. Various legal difficulties and labor troubles delayed beginning the construction of the building, but by November 10, 1902, the work had progressed so far that the cornerstone was laid. The building was opened to the public May 23, 1911, in the presence of the President of the United States, the Governor of the State of New York, the Mayor of New York, and an audience of about six hundred persons.

Exterior. The material of the building is largely Vermont marble, and the style that of the modern Renaissance, somewhat in the manner of the period of Louis XVI, with certain modifications to suit the conditions of to-day. It is rectangular in shape, 390 feet long and 270 feet deep, built around two inner courts. It has a cellar, basement or ground floor, and three upper floors.

[8]



MAIN ENTRANCE

"The Library," wrote Mr. A. C. David, in the *Architectural Record*^[1], "is undeniably popular. It has already taken its place in the public mind as a building of which every New Yorker may be proud, and this opinion of the building is shared by the architectural profession of the country. Of course, it does not please everybody; but if American architects in good standing were asked to name the one building which embodied most of what was good in contemporary American architecture, The New York Public Library would be the choice of a handsome majority."

[9]

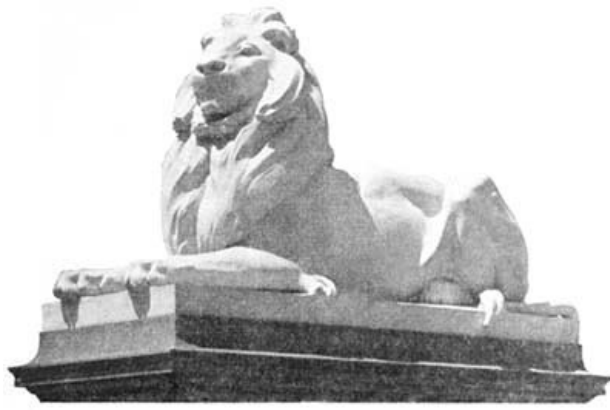
Mr. David continued: "The Library is not, then, intended to be a great monumental building, which would look almost as well from one point of view as another, and which would be fundamentally an example of pure architectural form. It is designed rather to face on the avenue of a city, and not to seem out of place on such a site. It is essentially and frankly an instance of street architecture; and as an instance of street architecture it is distinguished in its appearance rather than imposing. Not, indeed, that it is lacking in dignity. The façade on Fifth Avenue has poise, as well as distinction; character, as well as good manners. But still it does not insist upon its own peculiar importance, as every monumental building must do. It is content with a somewhat humbler rôle, but one which is probably more appropriate. It looks ingratiating rather than imposing, and that is probably one reason for its popularity. It is intended for popular rather than for official use, and the building issues to the people an invitation to enter rather than a command...."

"The final judgment on the Library will be, consequently, that it is not a great monument, because considerations of architectural form have in several conspicuous instances been deliberately subordinated to the needs of the plan. In this respect it resembles the new Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The building is at bottom a compromise between two groups of partly antagonistic demands, and a compromise can hardly ever become a consummate example of architectural form. But, on the other hand, Messrs. Carrère and Hastings have, as in so many other cases, made their compromise successful. Faithful as they have been to the fundamental requirement of adapting the building to its purpose as a library, they have also succeeded in making it look well; and they have succeeded in making it look well partly because the design is appropriate to its function as a building in which books are stored, read and distributed. A merely monumental library always appears somewhat forbidding and remote. The Library looks attractive, and so far as a large building can, even intimate...."

[10]



**TERRACE IN FRONT OF
LIBRARY
Looking South**



By Edward C. Potter

"The popularity of the Library has, consequently, been well earned. The public has reason to like it, because it offers them a smiling countenance; and the welcome it gives is merely the outward and visible sign of an inward grace. When people enter they will find a building which has been ingeniously and carefully adapted to their use. Professional architects like it, because they recognize the skill, the good taste and the abundant resources of which the building, as a whole, is the result; and while many of them doubtless cherish a secret thought that they would have done it better, they are obliged to recognize that in order to have done it better they would have been obliged to exhibit a high degree of architectural intelligence. In the realism of its plan and in the mixture of dignity and distinction in the design, The New York Public Library is typical of that which is best in the contemporary American architectural movement; and New York is fortunate, indeed, that such a statement can be made of the most important public building erected in the city during several generations." [11]



TERRACE LOOKING NORTH

Sculpture. Of the sculptural designs, the two lions on either side of the main approach are by E. C. Potter. They have been subjected to much criticism, mainly of a humorous nature, and in the daily press. This adverse comment has not been endorsed by critics of art and architecture. Mr. Potter was chosen for this work by Augustus St. Gaudens, and again, after Mr. St. Gaudens' death, by Mr. D. C. French, also an eminent sculptor. Any layman can satisfy himself, by a brief observation of the building as a whole, that the architectural balance of the structure demands figures of heroic size to flank the main approach. With that requirement in view, the designer of such figures has but a limited choice of subject, since there are few living creatures whose forms possess dignity without being cumbrous. The sculptor in this instance has followed well-established precedents in designing the lions according to the canons of decorative art. They are as realistic as would be suitable for figures of this size, and in this position. [12]

The groups in the pediments are by George Gray Barnard; the one in the northern pediment represents History, and the one in the southern, Art.

The figures above the fountains on either side of the main entrance are by Frederick MacMonnies; the man seated on the Sphinx, on the northern side of the entrance represents Truth. On the southern side, the figure of the woman seated on Pegasus represents Beauty. Above the figure of Truth is this inscription from the Apocrypha ([1 Esdras](#), chapter 3):

**BUT ABOVE ALL THINGS
TRUTH**

**BEARETH AWAY
THE VICTORY**

The inscription above the figure of Beauty is:

**BEAUTY
OLD YET EVER NEW
ETERNAL VOICE
AND INWARD WORD**

This is from the twenty-first stanza of Whittier's poem, "The Shadow and the Light."

The six figures above the main entrance are by Paul Bartlett; naming them from north to south they are: History, Drama, Poetry, Religion, Romance, and Philosophy. Above the entrance are inscriptions concerning three of the component parts of The New York Public Library. They are as follows:



[15]

**ROMANCE By Paul
Bartlett**

**THE LENOX LIBRARY
FOUNDED BY
JAMES LENOX
DEDICATED TO HISTORY
LITERATURE AND THE FINE ARTS
MDCCCLXX**



**PHILOSOPHY By
Paul Bartlett**

**THE ASTOR LIBRARY
FOUNDED BY
JOHN JACOB ASTOR
FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE
MDCCCXLVIII**

**THE TILDEN TRUST
FOUNDED BY
SAMUEL JONES TILDEN
TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF
SCIENCE AND POPULAR EDUCATION
MDCCCLXXXVI**

Beneath these is this inscription:

MDCCCXCV THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY MDCCCII

Of the dates in this inscription, the first, 1895, is that of the incorporation of The New York Public Library; the second, 1902, is that of the laying of the cornerstone.

The statue of William Cullen Bryant, behind the Library, is by Herbert Adams.

The rear of the building should be viewed from Bryant Park. The long windows are to light the bookstack. Some critics have commended the rear of the building very highly. Mr. A. C. David, in the article previously quoted, says:

"This façade is very plainly treated, without any pretence to architectural effect. It is, indeed, designed frankly as the rear of a structure which is not meant to be looked at except on the other sides. Any attempt, consequently, at monumental treatment has been abandoned. The building is designed to be seen from Fifth Avenue and from the side streets. The rear, on Bryant Park, merely takes care of itself; and one of the largest apartments in any edifice in the United States is practically concealed, so far as any positive exterior result is concerned."

[16]



A RAINY DAY—FIFTH AVENUE
From an Etching by Charles B. King

The large apartment referred to in this quotation is the Main Reading Room of the Library, which is described farther on in this Handbook.

[17]

FIRST FLOOR

Entrances. There are two entrances to the Library, the main entrance on Fifth Avenue, and the side door on 42nd Street, which gives admission to the basement, where the Central Circulation Room, the Newspaper Room and the Central Children's Room are to be found. On a first visit, however, the sightseer should use the main entrance on Fifth Avenue, in order to see the lobby, which rises through two stories, with broad staircases to the right and left. The flying arches of these staircases are of seventeen feet span, and are all of marble without any brick or metal work whatever. The marble used in the lobby is from Vermont. The ceiling is a true marble vault of forty feet span, supporting itself and the floor over it, with no metal whatever, except some reinforcing rods buried in the concrete filling in the floor above.

Between the pillars facing the entrance are two inscriptions. At the left is this:

**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
HAS ERECTED THIS BUILDING
TO BE MAINTAINED FOREVER
AS A FREE LIBRARY
FOR THE USE OF THE PEOPLE**

And at the right:

**ON THE DIFFUSION OF EDUCATION
AMONG THE PEOPLE
REST THE PRESERVATION
AND PERPETUATION
OF OUR FREE INSTITUTIONS**

The latter is a quotation from an address by Daniel Webster at Madison, Indiana, June 1, 1837.



TRUTH
**By Frederick
MacMonnies**

[18]



PART OF MAIN FAÇADE

Elevators are near the northern or 42nd Street end of the building. There is also a staircase at this end of the building, in addition to the staircases near the main entrance. [19]

Exhibition Room. Directly opposite the main entrance is the Exhibition Room, finished in white Vermont marble. The ceiling is supported by twenty-four columns of green veined white marble. The ceiling itself is elaborately and beautifully carved in oak. This room is devoted to exhibitions of rare books, manuscripts and prints. The exhibitions are changed from time to time, usually as often as three or four times a year. Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. on week days; 1 to 5 p. m. Sundays.

Current Periodicals Room. The corridor to the south from the main entrance leads to the Current Periodicals Room (Room Number 111). Here about 4,500 current periodicals are on file. A hundred of these are on open racks. The others may be obtained upon application at the desk. A classified finding list gives the reader the titles of periodicals kept here. As this room is sometimes confused in the public mind with a popular or club reading room, it should be remembered that this is one department in a building primarily devoted to the reference work of the Library. The few restrictions which are imposed are only for the purpose of keeping the files intact for binding. The Branches of The New York Public Library contain reading rooms where all the periodicals are on open racks.



[20]

Business Offices. Following the corridor leading south and then turning to the right along the 40th Street side of the building, one reaches some of the business offices of the Library—the office of the Bursar (No. 104), of the Building Superintendent (No. 103), of the Chief of the Circulation Department (No. 102), and of the Supervisor of work with children (No. 105). These offices are open for any persons who have occasion to visit them for business reasons, but they are of no interest to sightseers. In Room 100, devoted mainly to the cataloguing work of the Circulation Department, there is a card catalogue of all the books in this Department,—that is, in the Branches of the Library. The Room is open to the public, for the consultation of this catalogue, on week days from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m.

[21]



FRONT DOOR

Technology Division. Following the corridor leading to the north from the main entrance, there is, on the right, the room of the Technology Division (No. 115), devoted to applied science and engineering. The collection of books in this Division, or under its control, numbers about 65,000. In this room, as in all the special reading rooms, with a few exceptions, books are on open shelves for the free access of readers and students.

Patents Room (No. 121). At the end of the corridor parallel to 42nd Street, is the Patents Room, a part of the Technology Division. It is open from 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. on week days, and is closed on Sundays. Patents may be consulted evenings and Sundays by arrangement with the technology librarian, Room 115.

The Library for the Blind (No. 116) is on the inner or western side of the corridor leading north from the main entrance. This collection contains about 8,000 books in embossed type for blind readers, and, in addition, 5,500 music scores, also in embossed type. These books are lent not only in Greater New York, but are sent free by mail to blind readers in all parts of the States of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. A teacher employed by the Library goes to homes and institutions in the City of New York to teach adult blind persons to read by touch. The room is open on week days from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. A bronze tablet on the wall bears the following inscription:



BASE OF FLAGPOLE

[22]

[23]



NORTH WING

**THE NEW YORK
FREE CIRCULATING LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND
WAS FOUNDED BY RICHARD RANDALL FERRY**

**THROUGH THE EXERTIONS OF CLARA A. WILLIAMS
THIS LIBRARY WAS PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED**

**INCORPORATED, JUNE 3, 1895
TRANSFERRED TO THE N. Y. PUBLIC LIBRARY, FEB. 21, 1903**

TRUSTEES

**WILLIAM B. WAIT
CLARA A. WILLIAMS
CLARK B. FERRY
RICHARD RANDALL FERRY
CHARLES W. WESTON**

The trustees named on the tablet are, of course, those of the former organization: the "New York Free Circulating Library for the Blind."

SECOND FLOOR

On the second floor a corridor runs along the front of the building, turning into short corridors at the north and south, and also into a central corridor. From these corridors open studies, offices and special reading rooms. In the central corridor, four studies

open on the right, while the fifth room on this side is devoted to the:

Oriental Division (No. 219), with a collection of about 20,000 books and pamphlets in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, and other eastern languages. Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. week days.

Jewish Division (No. 217). Opposite the Oriental Division, on the south side of this central corridor, is the reading room devoted to the Jewish Division. There are about 24,000 books in the collection.

Slavonic Division. The room devoted to the Slavonic Division (No. 216) is also on the south side of the central corridor. The resources of this Division, books and periodicals in the various Slavonic languages, number about 23,000. [24]

Science Division. On the corridor parallel to Fifth Avenue, and leading north from the main staircase, the room on the right contains the Science Division (No. 225). There are about 35,000 books under the control of this Division. [25]

Economics Division. From the corridor on the northern or 42nd Street end of the building open the rooms devoted to Public Documents (No. 229) and Economics and Sociology. These were formerly separate divisions, but now united, and the entrance is through Room 229. The resources of the Division (including the large collection of Public Documents) number about 400,000 books and pamphlets.



REAR OF LIBRARY FROM BRYANT PARK

Business Offices. The rooms opening from the corridor running south from the main staircase are mostly business offices, devoted to the administration of the Library. They are of little interest to sightseers, but are open to any persons who have occasion to visit them. They include, on the front of the building, a lecture room (No. 213), the office of the Director of the Library (No. 210), and the meeting room of the Board of Trustees (No. 205). On the inner or western side of the corridor are: a study (No. 214), the office of the Editor of Publications (No. 212), and of the Reference Librarian (No. 211). The Trustees' Room may be seen on special application at the Director's office. Over the mantelpiece in this room is the inscription:

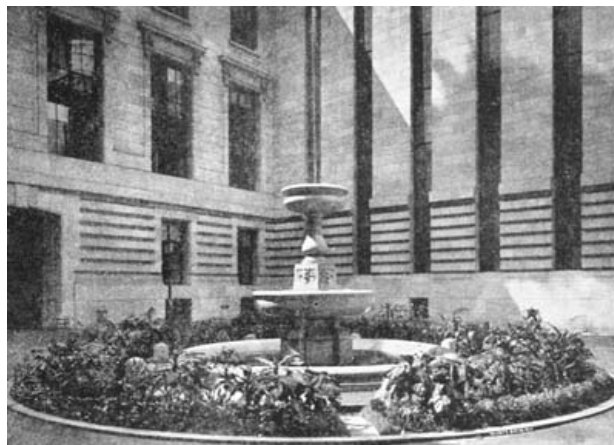
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK HAS ERECTED THIS
BUILDING FOR THE FREE USE OF ALL THE PEOPLE
MCMX
I LOOK TO THE DIFFUSION OF LIGHT AND EDUCATION
AS THE RESOURCE MOST TO BE RELIED ON FOR
AMELIORATING THE CONDITION PROMOTING THE VIRTUE
AND ADVANCING THE HAPPINESS OF MAN**

THOMAS JEFFERSON



MALL BEHIND LIBRARY

On the corridor leading west, and running along the 40th Street end of the building, are workrooms, open only to visitors having business engagements. These rooms are the office of the Order Division (No. 204) and of the Cataloguing and Accessions Divisions (No. 200 and No. 201). [27]



SOUTH COURT

THIRD FLOOR

The most important room on the third floor and, indeed, the centre of activity of the entire Reference Department of the Library, is the Main Reading Room, approached through the Public Catalogue Room. The latter opens from the western side of the corridor at the head of the staircases.

Public Catalogue Room. This room (No. 315) contains the catalogue of the books in the Reference Department of the Library,—that is, the books available to readers in the Main Reading Room and in the special reading rooms of the Central Building. It is a dictionary catalogue, on cards, in which the books are entered by author, by subject, and by title, when the title is distinctive. The catalogue is in trays arranged in alphabetical order, beginning on the northwest wall of the room and running to the right. At the end of this catalogue, and on the southern side of the room, is an author catalogue of the books in the Central Circulation Branch and Central Children's Room, Rooms 78 and 80, in the basement. At the end of this second catalogue and separated from it by a public telephone, is a catalogue of the books in the Library of Congress for which printed catalogue cards have been issued.

[28]



NORTHWEST CORNER

Near the entrance to the Public Catalogue Room, and at the right, is a bronze tablet:

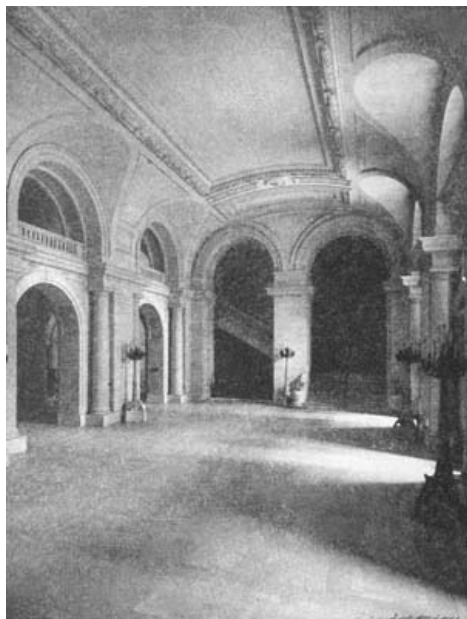
[29]

**BORN A.D. MDCCCXIII
 (Bas-relief of Sir Isaac Pitman)
 TABLET ERECTED A.D. MCMXIII
 TO COMMEMORATE
 THE
 ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
 OF THE BIRTH OF
 SIR ISAAC PITMAN
 AND IN RECOGNITION OF THE
 IMPORTANT COLLECTION OF
 SHORTHAND LITERATURE
 IN THE
 NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Over the door leading from the Public Catalogue Room to the Main Reading Room is inscribed the famous quotation from Milton's "Areopagitica":

**A good Booke
is the precious life-blood of a
master spirit, embalm'd and treasur'd
up on purpose to a life beyond life**

[30]



ENTRANCE LOBBY

Information Desk. The Information Desk of the Library is in the Public Catalogue Room, and here inquiries should be made about the resources and regulations of the Library, the use of the catalogue, and any other matter upon which the visitor may have a question to ask.

[31]

Application for books to be used in the Main Reading Room should be made in the Public Catalogue Room. The applicant writes his request upon the slip furnished for the purpose, and files it at the desk in this room. A numbered ticket is handed him, which he takes into the Main Reading Room, going to the right if the ticket number is odd; to the left if the number is even. He then waits at the indicator at the western end of the delivery desk until the number on his ticket appears. This means that his books are ready for him at the desk. If, however, he prefers first to select a seat in the Main Reading Room, he should write the number of that seat on his application, and his books will be left at that seat, if he is there to receive them.

The Main Reading Room, in the rear, extends nearly the entire length of the building. It has a floor area of half an acre, and is divided in the middle by a booth from which books are delivered. There are seats for 768 readers. Mr. A. C. David, in the article previously quoted from the *Architectural Record*, says:

"The Main Reading Room is one of the most spacious rooms in the world—beautifully proportioned, lighted by a series of windows on both the long sides of the room, and entirely accessible to the stacks. To have obtained a room of these dimensions, so excellently adapted to its purpose in every respect, was a great triumph for the architects."

[32]

The shelves along the walls contain a collection of about 25,000 volumes. These books are not only the usual works of reference,—dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and the like, but they also include a good working library of general literature,—philosophy, religion, science, history, law, biography, standard novels, poetry, and the drama. These books are for the free use of anyone in this room, without the need of making any application. The reader has only to select the book he wishes, and to take it to a table, where he may consult it. When he has finished he should leave it on the table, rather than attempt to return it to its place, since a misplaced book is temporarily lost.

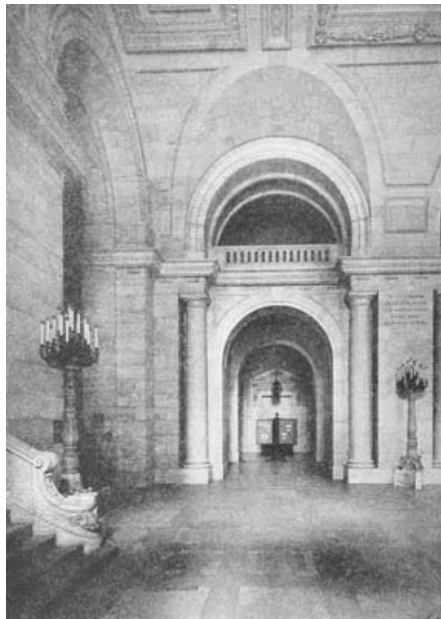
[33]





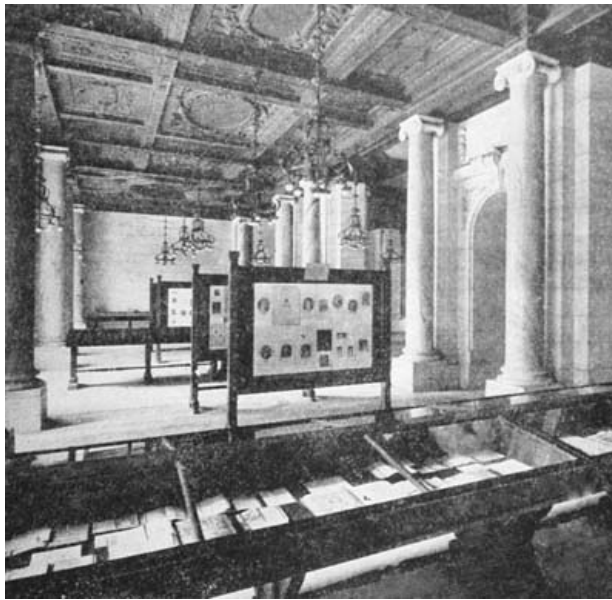
**DOOR OF EXHIBITION
ROOM**

The Library's Books. It should be kept in mind that the books of the Reference Department are all in the Central Building, and must all be used in that building. The great body of them are in the stack beneath the Main Reading Room. In addition, there are the books in the Main Reading Room itself, and in the special reading rooms in other parts of the building. Books and pamphlets number, altogether, about one million and a quarter.



**ENTRANCE LOBBY, LOOKING
WEST**

The books in the Central Circulation Room and in the Children's Room in the basement, the books in the Library for the Blind, those in the Travelling Libraries office in the basement, and those in the forty-three Branch Libraries in other parts of the Boroughs of Manhattan, The Bronx, and Richmond are under control of the Circulation Department of the Library. Nearly all of these books are lent to borrowers for home use. They number about 1,100,000 volumes. [34]

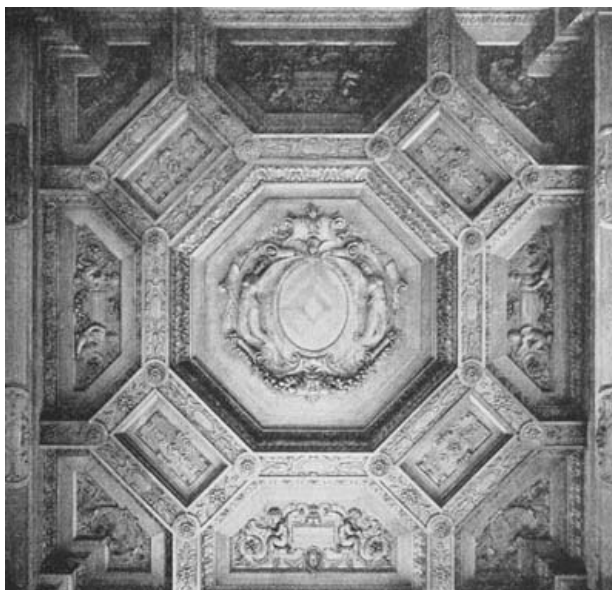


SOUTH SIDE OF EXHIBITION ROOM



MAIN READING ROOM

In regard to the books in the Reference Department, it is correct to say that in them the Library [35] owns a well-balanced collection for research in nearly every branch of human knowledge. The books formerly in the Astor and Lenox Libraries compose the foundation of the collection. The subjects most adequately represented are those of American history, of topics connected with the [36] American continents, and the economic and social sciences. There are also extensive sets of public documents, of the publications of learned institutions, as well as comprehensive files of periodicals. In recent years not so much attempt has been made to get publications on law, theology, medicine and biology, since there are special libraries, elsewhere in the City, where these subjects are covered. The reader is nevertheless sure to find in the special reading rooms, and in the books which may be brought to the Main Reading Room for his use, the fundamental printed sources in practically every field of knowledge.



PANEL IN CEILING, EXHIBITION ROOM

[37]



**DOOR IN SCREEN
Main Reading Room**

Use of Books. The Library's situation in the metropolis, and its freedom from restrictions (according to the custom of American libraries) have caused the use of its books to become two or three times greater than that of any of the other large libraries of the world; the average daily number of readers is more than double the number in any foreign library.

Stack. Underneath the Main Reading Room is the steel stack, in seven decks, containing 334,500 feet, or 63.3 miles, of shelving. It has room for about 2,500,000 books. (The special reading rooms have a shelf capacity for about 500,000 books.) The books in the stack are brought by electric elevators to the Main Reading Room, as they are called for by readers. The stack is not open to readers or visitors.

Genealogy Room. At the northern end of the Main Reading Room is the room devoted to Local History and Genealogy (No. 328). The collection numbers about thirty thousand volumes.

American History Division. At the southern end of the Main Reading Room is the room devoted to American history (No. 300). It is one of the strongest divisions of the Library, since its books are so distinguished among collections of this kind as to make them of the greatest importance to students and scholars in the field of American history. The foundation of this collection was formed by the books on American history owned by James Lenox, the founder of the Lenox Library, one of the components of the present New York Public Library. The tablet in the floor near the entrance of Room 300 is inscribed as follows:

**IN MEMORY OF
JAMES LENOX
A NATIVE AND RESIDENT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BORN AUGUST 19 1800
DIED FEBRUARY 17 1880
THE TRUSTEES OF
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
IN PERFORMANCE OF A GRATEFUL DUTY
HAVE CAUSED THIS TABLET TO BE PLACED
HERE AMONG THE BOOKS HE CHERISHED
AS A MEMORIAL OF HIS SERVICES
TO THE HISTORY OF AMERICA**

From the corridors on the front and sides of the third floor, rooms open in the following order, beginning with the corridor at the south, running along the 40th Street side of the building:



[39]

[40]

[41]



PART OF MAIN READING ROOM

Reserve Books (No. 303): In this room are kept the rare and reserved books of the Library.

Among the foremost treasures of the Library are: the Gutenberg Bible (printed by Gutenberg and Fust about 1455, one of the earliest books printed from movable types); the Coverdale Bible (1535); Tyndale's Pentateuch (1530) and New Testament (1536); and Eliot's Indian Bible. In fact, the collection of early Bibles in English is one of the great collections of the kind in existence. The Library also owns four copies of the First Folio Shakespeare (1623); several copies of the Second, Third, and Fourth Folios (1632, 1663-64, 1685); thirty-five editions of the Shakespeare Quartos, before 1709; eight works printed by William Caxton (1475-90); the Bay Psalm Book, the first book printed in the territory now comprised in the United States (Cambridge, 1640); and the Doctrina Christiana, printed in Mexico in 1544.

[42]



[43]

BOOK STACK
(Showing Half the Length of One Deck)

One contribution to the Library has been commemorated by a tablet near the door of this room. It bears the inscription:

THE
BAILEY MYERS COLLECTION
OF
AMERICANA
FORMED BY
THEODORUS BAILEY MYERS
OF
NEW YORK CITY
1821-1888
GIVEN BY HIS WIDOW, DAUGHTER
AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AS A
MEMORIAL OF HIM AND HIS SON
THEODORUS BAILEY MYERS MASON
LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
UNITED STATES NAVY

Opposite, in Room 304, is the office of the Bibliographer of the Library, and of the Chief of the American History Division.

Prints Room. Opening from the corridor on the east (the front) of the Library is the Prints Room (No. 308). Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. week days; 1 to 6 p. m. Sundays. Here is the Samuel P. Avery Collection of 18,000 prints. They are mainly French and other modern etchings and lithographs.

There is also a large collection of modern American prints, a collection of Japanese prints in color, and a collection of old prints illustrating the development of reproductive graphic art to the present day.

Art and Architecture. Room 313 is the reading room devoted to Art and Architecture. The resources of the collection, about 25,000 books, deal with art and craftsmanship in the widest sense.

[44]



[45]

TRUSTEES' ROOM

Map Room. On the inner, or western, side of this corridor, opposite Room 313, is the Map Room (No. 312), a part of the American History Division. Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. on week days.

Stuart Gallery. Opening from the corridor on the front of the building, and directly opposite the entrance to the Public Catalogue Room, is the room devoted to the Stuart Collection (No. 316). Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. on week days. Closed on Sundays. This contains pictures, books, and other objects of art bequeathed by Mrs. Robert L. Stuart. On the east wall of the Gallery is a tablet with this inscription:

**THE
ROBERT L. STUART
COLLECTION
THE GIFT OF HIS WIDOW,
MRS. MARY STUART.
BEQUEATHED TO THE
LENOX LIBRARY
1892.**

Catalogues of the paintings are on sale for ten cents.

General Gallery. The next room to the north is the general gallery (No. 318). (Sign reads "Picture Gallery.") The pictures in this room are largely from the collection of James Lenox. The catalogue, mentioned in the preceding paragraph, gives a list of them, and a brief description of many. Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. week days and 1 to 5 p. m. Sundays.

Prints Gallery. Opening from No. 318, and also from the north end of the front corridor, is the Prints Gallery (No. 321). Here are held exhibitions of prints, changed several times each year. Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. on week days and 1 to 5 p. m. Sundays.

[46]

Manuscript Division. On the west or inner side of the front corridor is the research room of the Manuscript Division (No. 319). This is open only to those who hold cards signed by the Director of the Library. Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. week days. The Division has a good selection of Oriental manuscripts, and of European illuminated manuscripts. Among these older ones may be mentioned an "Evangelistarium, sive Lectiones ex Evangeliiis," a French-Carolingian manuscript on 200 vellum leaves, date about 870 A. D. Another manuscript of special note is the work of Giulio Clovio, his "Christi Vita ab Evangelistis descripta," sometimes called "The Towneley Lectionary." It was made for Alexander, Cardinal Farnese, and was presented by him to Pope Paul III.



**ONE OF THE SPECIAL READING ROOMS
(Genealogy and Local History)**

The collection of American historical manuscripts ranks as one of the best in the United States. Here, for example, is the original manuscript of Washington's "Farewell Address," a copy of the Declaration of Independence in Jefferson's autograph, and many other letters and original sources for research. Lists of the principal manuscripts have been printed in the Bulletin of The New York Public Library (Volume 5, page 306-336, and volume 19, page 135-162). [47]

Music Division. Turning to the west, the corridor along the 42nd Street side of the building leads to the Music Division (No. 324), which opens from the north side of the corridor. It is open week days from 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. The resources of the Division number about twenty-two thousand volumes and pieces of music.

A tablet at the north end of the room bears this inscription:

**DREXEL MUSICAL LIBRARY.
THE LEGACY OF JOSEPH W. DREXEL 1888.**

On the east wall is a tablet reading as follows:

**IN MEMORY OF
1855 JULIAN EDWARDS 1910
WHOSE COLLECTION OF MUSIC SCORES
AND BOOKS WAS GIVEN TO THIS LIBRARY**

BASEMENT

The basement contains three rooms of public interest. The entrance from 42nd Street is the most convenient way to reach these rooms from the outside of the building, but a visitor on one of the upper floors should take the elevator or the staircase, both near the north end of the building.



CENTRAL CIRCULATION ROOM

Newspaper Room. In the Newspaper Room (No. 84) about sixty daily newspapers are on racks for free use, without the need of any application. About twenty-five foreign newspapers are obtainable upon application at the desk. A bulletin board at the right of the entrance gives full information about these and other resources of the Newspaper Room. [48]

On the western side of the entrance corridor, near the door of the Circulating Library, is a bronze tablet with the following inscription: [49]

[Seal of The New York Public Library]

**THIS BUILDING IS ERECTED
UPON A PART OF THE COMMON LANDS
WHICH WERE GRANTED BY ROYAL CHARTER
TO THE MAYOR ALDERMEN AND COMMONALTY
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
IN 1686,**

THE SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF JAMES THE SECOND
KING OF ENGLAND.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK IN 1897,
WILLIAM L. STRONG BEING MAYOR,
UNDERTOOK TO CONSTRUCT,
AT THE PUBLIC EXPENSE,
A BUILDING UPON THIS SITE
TO BE USED AND OCCUPIED BY
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY,
ASTOR, LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
SO LONG AS IT SHOULD MAINTAIN HEREIN
A FREE LIBRARY AND READING ROOM FOR THE PEOPLE.

WORK WAS BEGUN BY THE CITY IN 1899,
ROBERT ANDERSON VAN WYCK BEING MAYOR.
THE CORNERSTONE WAS LAID IN 1902,
SETH LOW BEING MAYOR.
THE BUILDING WAS COMPLETED IN 1909,
GEORGE BRINTON McCLELLAN BEING MAYOR.
IT WAS OCCUPIED AND OPENED TO THE PUBLIC IN 1911
WILLIAM JAY GAYNOR BEING MAYOR.



NORTH STAIRCASE

Central Circulation Branch (sign over door reads, "Circulating Library") (No. 80). This is one of the forty-four Branches of The New York Public Library, intended for the circulation of books for home use. In this instance alone the Branch is situated in the Central Building and is supported by the funds of the Library and not by the City. The room is interesting because of its activity. The view of it reproduced in this book had to be taken when but few people were there, but during afternoons and evenings, especially in the autumn, winter, and spring months, the room is frequently over-crowded with readers and borrowers of books. As over 500,000 books were borrowed from this one room during 1915 it may be said that there are few, if any, busier library rooms in the country, or, indeed, in the world. There is a collection of over 50,000 books, with a reserve collection of somewhat more than 70,000. The room is open 9 a. m. to 10 p. m. week days, including all holidays, and 2 to 6 p. m. on Sundays. [50] [51]

Children's Room. Near the 42nd Street entrance a corridor runs east to the Children's Room (No. 78). The visitor to the building should not fail to see this room, with its attractive furnishings, its collections of brightly colored picture-books, and pictures.

The object of the room is not only to perform the usual work of a children's room, but also to interest and help parents and others in selecting children's reading. Authors, artists, and publishers come here for information about books for children. Another purpose is to furnish suggestions for similar rooms elsewhere. A number of libraries, in other parts of the world, have adopted suggestions which they found here. Exhibitions on various subjects are held from time to time, and there is a collection of children's books of the old-fashioned kind. Open 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. week days.



CHILDREN'S ROOM

Library School. Here a two years' course in training for library work is given to a body of students averaging about seventy-five in number. The office of the School (where inquiries should be made) is in Room 75, on the inner or western side of the corridor which runs along the front of the building, parallel to Fifth Avenue. The Library School class room, not open to the public, is on the other side of the corridor. [52]

Public Telephones. The public telephones are in Room 70, on the inner or western side of the front corridor. [53]

Business Offices. The rest of the basement floor is occupied by offices, open only to those who have business engagements therein. The offices include that for Printing and Binding (No. 58), and the Shipping Room (No. 51). In the Printing Office the catalogue cards of the Library, printed forms, and all the Library's publications are printed. For the publications, see page 78.

Travelling Libraries Office. The entrance to the Travelling Libraries office is from Bryant Park, at the southwest corner of the building. The office itself is not of interest to sightseers. As it is under control of the Circulation Department, its work is described on page 59.

FOOTNOTE:

[1] September, 1910.



THE CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

BRANCH LIBRARIES—HOURS OF OPENING: CENTRAL CIRCULATION open 9 a. m. to 10 p. m. every week day, 2 to 6 p. m. on Sundays. CHILDREN'S ROOM 9 a. m. to 6 p. m. on week days. LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND, TRAVELLING LIBRARIES, and OFFICES open 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. on week days.

OTHER BRANCHES, 9 a. m. to 9 p. m. on week days. Exceptions as follows: CENTRAL CIRCULATION and branches in Carnegie buildings open full hours on all holidays; other branches closed on January 1, May 30, July 4, December 25, presidential election day, and Thanksgiving; after 6 p. m. on February 22 and Christmas eve; after 5 p. m. on election days other than presidential elections.

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

The Circulation Department of the Library performs its work through forty-four Branch Libraries in the Boroughs of Manhattan, Richmond (Staten Island), and The Bronx. (Each of the other two Boroughs of Greater New York, Brooklyn and Queens, has its own Public Library.) These

[55]

Branches are in separate buildings, with the exception of the Circulation Branch in the Central Building. That is supported by the funds of the Library; all the others are maintained by the City. Thirty-seven of the Branch buildings were erected from funds given by Mr. Andrew Carnegie. The collections of books in the Branches number from ten to fifty thousand, with a total of about 1,100,000 books.

Each Branch has an adult department, with its collection of books for adult readers, a children's room, and a reading room with current magazines, reference books, and, in many cases, daily newspapers. Many of the Branches contain lecture or assembly rooms.

These Branch Libraries serve a population estimated at above three million. The Branches are spread over a large territory, and from the northernmost of them, in the Borough of The Bronx, to the one farthest south, on Staten Island, the distance is about forty miles. A directory of Branches is on page [77](#).

Circulation of Books. The New York Public Library, according to the general custom of American libraries, imposes few restrictions upon its readers. This fact, together with its situation in the metropolis of the country, is the reason why it is probably used more than any other library under one management in the world. The use is constantly growing. In 1915 there were borrowed from the Branch Libraries, for home use, 10,384,579 books. [56]



SEWARD PARK BRANCH

Special Collections. There are books in foreign languages, especially French and German, in all the Branches. The principal collections of books in foreign tongues other than French and German, are these: [57]

<i>Language</i>	<i>Branch</i>
Bohemian	Webster.
Chinese	Chatham Square.
Danish	Tottenville, 125th Street.
Dutch	Muhlenberg.
Finnish	125th Street.
Flemish	Muhlenberg.
Greek (Modern)	Muhlenberg.
Hebrew	Seward Park, Aguilar.
Hungarian	Tompkins Square, Hamilton Fish Park, Yorkville, Woodstock.
Italian	Hudson Park, Aguilar, Bond Street.
Norwegian	Tottenville.
Polish	Rivington Street, Tompkins Square, Columbus, Melrose.
Roumanian	Rivington Street.
Russian	Seward Park, Rivington Street, Hamilton Fish Park, 96th Street, Chatham Square.
Slovak	Webster.
Spanish	Jackson Square.
Swedish	125th Street, 58th Street.
Servian	Muhlenberg.
Yiddish	Rivington Street, Seward Park, Hamilton Fish Park, Aguilar, Tremont.

Interbranch Loan. A book in any one of the Branches is available to a reader at any other Branch through a system of interbranch loans.

Reading Rooms. The total attendance in the adult reading rooms in the Branch Libraries, during 1915, was 1,224,526. The greatest use of reading rooms is at two of the Branches on the lower East Side. [58]



ADULTS' ROOM—58th STREET BRANCH

Library for the Blind. The Library for the Blind, although under control of the Circulation Department, has its headquarters and reading room in the Central Building. Its work has been described on page [22](#).



MOTT HAVEN BRANCH

Travelling Libraries. From the office of the Travelling Libraries, in the Central Building, collections of books are sent to communities and homes in outlying districts of the city; to churches, Sunday schools, settlements, clubs, stores, factories,—in fact, to any community or institution not readily served by a Branch Library. There are about 800 stations with Travelling Libraries. The circulation through these agencies, in 1915, numbered 962,355 books. Travelling Library stations are established in mercantile houses, in Fire and Police stations, fire boats, Federal, State, and City Department offices, armories, ships of the coast guard, vacation playgrounds, and summer camps. Books are sent in this manner to prisons, workhouses, elementary and high schools, hospitals, and army posts in New York City.

[60]



**BOND STREET BRANCH
(The Oldest Branch)**



TRAVELLING LIBRARY IN A MERCANTILE HOUSE

Work with Children. The work with children comprises a great deal besides the maintenance of children's rooms and the circulation of children's books. In 1915, the total circulation of books to children, including the figures recorded by the juvenile work of the Travelling Libraries, was 4,415,794, or forty-two per cent. of the total circulation of the Library. The Library works with the schools and museums. It holds special exhibitions, meetings, and celebrations of interest to children and to parents. Between fifty and sixty reading clubs for the older boys and girls meet at the Branch Libraries. Groups of children gather in the Branches from November to May, to attend "story hours."

Lectures and meetings. The Branches are used as meeting places by literary, educational and social organizations and clubs. Assembly rooms in the Branches are open for any meeting of an instructive or literary nature, provided that no admission fee is charged, and that nothing of a political or sectarian character is discussed. Many classes of foreigners learning English meet regularly in the Branch Libraries.



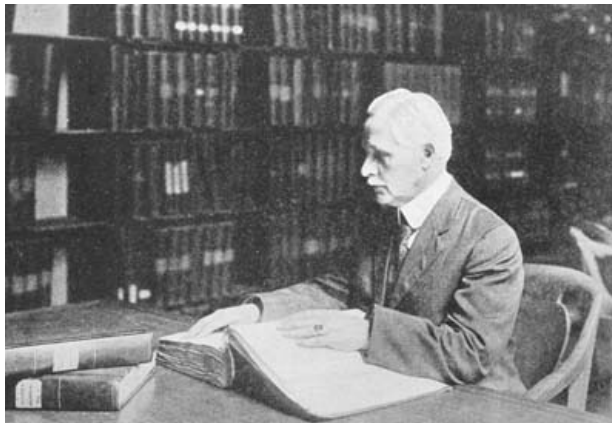
AT A STORY HOUR

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE LIBRARY

The New York Public Library, as it exists to-day, is the result of the generosity of a few private citizens, combined with the efforts of the City itself. Its corporate existence, in its present form, began on May 23, 1895, by the consolidation of: "The Trustees of the Astor Library," "The Trustees of the Lenox Library," and "The Tilden Trust."

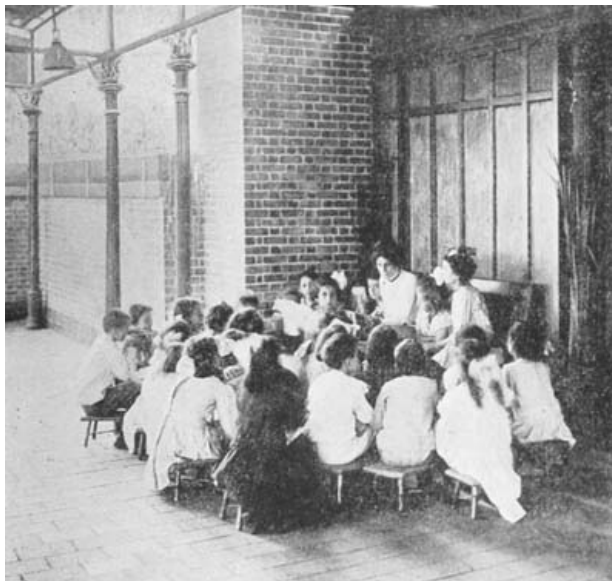


LIBRARY'S INSTRUCTOR TEACHING THE BLIND TO READ

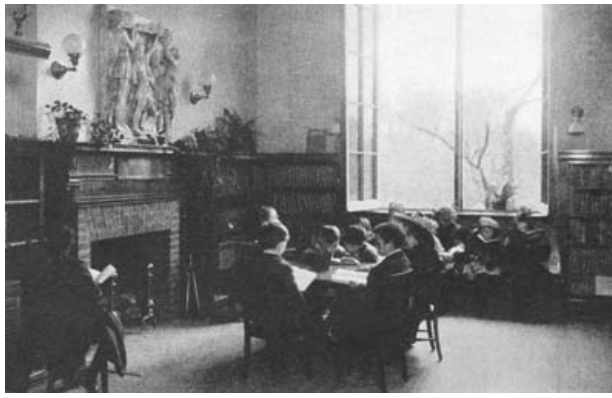


READING WITH THE FINGERS IN THE LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND

The Astor Library, originally incorporated in 1849, was founded by John Jacob Astor. His gifts, together with those of his sons and grandsons, amounted to about \$1,700,000. Washington Irving [64] was the first President of the Library, and Joseph Green Cogswell its first Superintendent, or Librarian. In its building on Lafayette Place (now Lafayette Street) it was for many years one of the literary landmarks of New York. At the time of its consolidation with The New York Public [65] Library it had an endowment fund of about \$941,000, which produced an annual income of about \$47,000. It contained then 266,147 volumes. It was solely a reference library,—the funds were given with the understanding that the books should not be lent for use outside the building.



SUMMER AFTERNOON STORY HOUR



**CORNER OF CHILDREN'S READING ROOM,
HARLEM LIBRARY BRANCH**

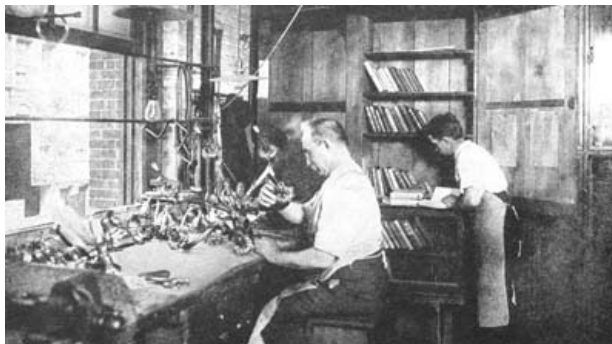
The Lenox Library. James Lenox, one of America's greatest book collectors, was born in New York City in 1800 and died there in 1880. In 1870, by the incorporation of the Lenox Library, he gave to the city of his birth his books and art treasures. The building, which formerly stood on Fifth Avenue between 70th and 71st Streets, was erected for the Library and opened to the public, a part at a time, beginning in 1876. At the time of consolidation the Library owned its building, an endowment fund of \$505,500, which yielded an annual income of about \$20,500; and about 86,000 volumes. This also was a reference library, not a circulating library.



**VISIT OF A CLASS FROM A PUBLIC
SCHOOL**

The Tilden Trust. Samuel Jones Tilden was born in New Lebanon, New York, in 1814. He died in New York City in 1886. By the final settlement of his estate the City received his private library and an endowment fund of about \$2,000,000, for library purposes.

[68]



[69]

TRAVELLING LIBRARY IN A FACTORY

Consolidation. In the agreement for consolidation it was provided that the name of the new corporation should be "The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations"; that the number of its trustees should be twenty-one, to be selected from the thirty-three members of the separate boards; and that "the said new corporation shall establish and maintain a free public library and reading room in the City of New York, with such branches as may be deemed advisable, and shall continue and promote the several objects and purposes set forth in the respective acts of incorporation of 'The Trustees of the Astor Library,' 'The Trustees of the Lenox Library,' and 'The Tilden Trust.'"

[70]



TRAVELLING LIBRARY IN FIRE-ENGINE HOUSE

Later, another member was added to the Board of Trustees, and three municipal officials were made members *ex officio*. [71]

The first Director of The New York Public Library was Dr. John Shaw Billings, who served from 1896 until his death in 1913. He rendered distinguished services, especially in the organization of the new Library and in the arrangement of the Central Building.



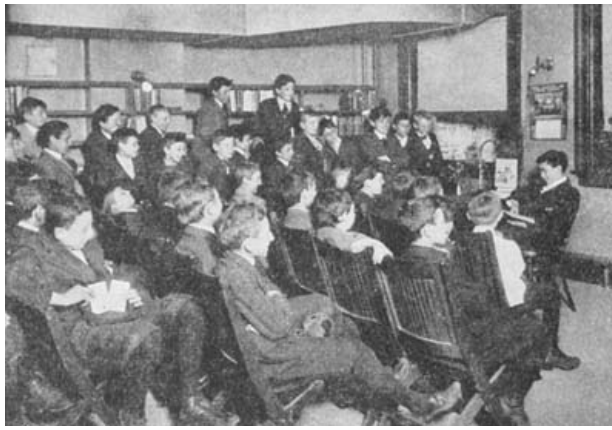
ROOF READING ROOM, SEWARD PARK BRANCH

New York Free Circulating Library. In 1901 the New York Free Circulating Library was consolidated with the new system. This Library had then eleven Branches and owned about 160,000 volumes.

Other Circulating Libraries. In 1901, the St. Agnes Free Library and the Washington Heights Free Library were also added to the system. The New York Free Circulating Library for the Blind and the Aguilar Free Library, with four Branches, were added in 1903. In 1904, the Harlem Free Library, Tottenville Free Library, the University Settlement Library at Rivington and Eldridge Streets, and the Webster Free Library followed. Also in 1904 the five Branches of the Cathedral Free Circulating Library became part of the new corporation.

Carnegie Branches. In 1901 Mr. Andrew Carnegie offered Greater New York \$5,200,000 for the construction and equipment of free circulating libraries, on condition that the City provide the land and agree to maintain the libraries when built. The offer was accepted, and thirty-seven Branch Libraries are now housed in buildings erected with that part of Mr. Carnegie's gift assigned to The New York Public Library. A directory of all the Branch Libraries may be found on page [77](#).

Management. The corporation is managed by a Board of twenty-five Trustees, including the Mayor, Comptroller, and President of the Board of Aldermen *ex officio*. The names of the Trustees are given on page [76](#). The Trustees hold office continuously, and vacancies are filled by vote of the remaining Trustees. No Trustee receives any compensation for his services. The immediate management of the Library is entrusted to the Director. The Staff numbers between twelve and thirteen hundred persons, including those in the Central Building and in the Branches. As the buildings are open between twelve and thirteen hours a day the Staff works in two shifts. Somewhat less than half of the Staff are employed in the Central Building. [72]



BOYS' CLUB; YORKVILLE BRANCH

Benefactors. A complete list of the Library's benefactors, besides the three founders, can more appropriately be given elsewhere. In addition to Mr. Carnegie's gift, one bequest should be noted here: that of John S. Kennedy, who in 1909 left about \$3,000,000 to the Library, without conditions.

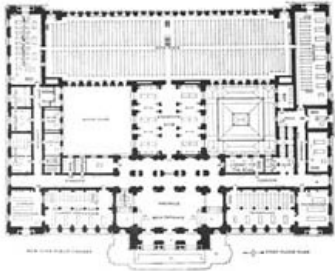
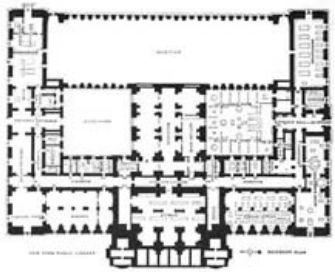
[73]

Work of the Library. This historical sketch may help to make clear the organization and work of the Library as it is carried on to-day. It is a free reference library combined with a free circulating library. The books in the Reference Department (in the Central Building) which came from either the Astor or the Lenox Libraries, and those which have been added since the consolidation, from the endowments of those Libraries, must necessarily be for reference use only. The Astor and Lenox Foundations give the Trustees of The New York Public Library no option in this matter. About one million books in the Circulation Department (the Branch Libraries) are lent for home use.



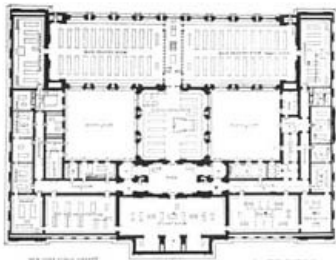
KINGSBRIDGE BRANCH

[74]



FLOOR PLANS, CENTRAL BUILDING

FLOOR PLANS, CENTRAL BUILDING



FLOOR PLANS, CENTRAL BUILDING

FLOOR PLANS, CENTRAL BUILDING

[75]

TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS OF THE LIBRARY

[76]

WILLIAM W. APPLETON
ANDREW CARNEGIE
CLEVELAND H. DODGE
JOHN MURPHY FARLEY
SAMUEL GREENBAUM
FREDERIC R. HALSEY
JOHN HENRY HAMMOND
LEWIS CASS LEDYARD
J. P. MORGAN
MORGAN J. O'BRIEN
STEPHEN H. OLIN
HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN
WILLIAM BARCLAY PARSONS
GEORGE L. RIVES
ELIHU ROOT
CHARLES HOWLAND RUSSELL
EDWARD W. SHELDON
GEORGE W. SMITH
I. N. PHELPS STOKES
FREDERICK STURGES

HENRY W. TAFT
PAYNE WHITNEY

JOHN PURROY MITCHEL, Mayor of the City of New York, *ex officio*

WILLIAM A. PRENDERGAST,
Comptroller of the City of New York, *ex officio*

FRANK L. DOWLING, President of the Board of Aldermen, *ex officio*

OFFICERS

President, GEORGE L. RIVES
First Vice-President, LEWIS CASS LEDYARD
Second Vice-President, ELIHU ROOT
Secretary, CHARLES HOWLAND RUSSELL
Treasurer, EDWARD W. SHELDON
Director of the Library, EDWIN H. ANDERSON

Chief Reference Librarian, H. M. LYDENBERG
Chief of the Circulation Department, BENJAMIN ADAMS

BRANCH LIBRARIES

[77]

With the exception of the Central Building, the names of the Branches in Manhattan and The Bronx are arranged as they are situated, from south to north.

Names marked with a star (*) are of Branches occupying Carnegie buildings.

MANHATTAN

CENTRAL BUILDING. Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street
CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM
LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND
TRAVELLING LIBRARIES
CHATHAM SQUARE.* 33 East Broadway
SEWARD PARK.* 192 East Broadway
RIVINGTON STREET.* 61
HAMILTON FISH PARK.* 388 East Houston Street
HUDSON PARK.* 66 Leroy Street
BOND STREET, 49. Near the Bowery
OTTENDORFER. 135 Second Avenue. Near 8th Street
TOMPKINS SQUARE.* 331 East 10th Street
JACKSON SQUARE. 251 West 13th Street
EPIPHANY.* 228 East 23rd Street
MUHLENBERG.* 209 West 23rd Street
ST. GABRIEL'S PARK.* 303 East 36th Street
40TH STREET.* 457 West
CATHEDRAL. 123 East 50th Street
COLUMBUS.* 742 Tenth Avenue. Near 51st Street
58TH STREET.* 121 East
67TH STREET.* 328 East
RIVERSIDE.* 190 Amsterdam Avenue. Near 69th Street
WEBSTER.* 1465 Avenue A. Near 78th Street
YORKVILLE.* 222 East 79th Street
ST. AGNES.* 444 Amsterdam Avenue. Near 81st Street
96TH STREET.* 112 East
BLOOMINGDALE. 206 West 100th Street
AGUILAR.* 174 East 110th Street
115TH STREET.* 203 West
HARLEM LIBRARY.* 9 West 124th Street
125TH STREET.* 224 East
GEORGE BRUCE. 78 Manhattan Street
135TH STREET.* 103 West
HAMILTON GRANGE.* 503 West 145th Street
WASHINGTON HEIGHTS.* 1000 St. Nicholas Ave. Cor. of 160th St.
FORT WASHINGTON.* 535 West 179th Street

THE BRONX

MOTT HAVEN.* 321 East 140th Street
WOODSTOCK.* 759 East 160th Street
MELROSE.* 910 Morris Avenue. Corner of 162nd Street.
HIGH BRIDGE.* 78 West 168th Street
MORRISANIA.* 610 East 169th Street
TREMONT.* 1866 Washington Avenue. Corner of 176th Street
KINGSBRIDGE.* 3041 Kingsbridge Avenue. Near 230th Street

RICHMOND (STATEN ISLAND)

ST. GEORGE.* 5 Central Avenue. Tompkinsville P. O.
PORT RICHMOND.* 75 Bennett Street
STAPLETON.* 132 Canal Street
TOTTENVILLE.* 7430 Amboy Road

PUBLICATIONS OF THE LIBRARY

[78]

A reader of this Handbook may wish to know about some other sources of information concerning the Library. For that reason a few of its publications are named here. They may be consulted in the Central Building or any of the Branches.

Annual Report of The New York Public Library. (A limited number are sent to institutions or private persons upon request.)

Bulletin of The New York Public Library. Published monthly. Chiefly devoted to the Reference Department. Bibliography, news of the Library, reprints of manuscripts, descriptions of new accessions. One dollar a year; current single numbers for ten cents. Back numbers at advanced rates.

Branch Library News. Monthly publication of the Circulation Department. Lists of new books, reading lists, articles about books, etc. Given free at the Branches. By mail free to libraries and other public institutions. Otherwise, twenty-five cents a year.

Facts for the Public. A small pamphlet of general information about the Library. Much of its contents is also contained in this Handbook. Given free.

Central Building Guide. A small pamphlet. Price five cents.

THE CROTON RESERVOIR

[79]

As the Central Building of the Library stands on part of the site of the old Croton Reservoir, it is fitting to reprint here the inscriptions on two tablets which were formerly affixed to the Reservoir.

One tablet is now on the first floor of the Central Building, on the wall of the south or 40th Street corridor. The inscription is:

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF THE CROTON AQUEDUCT

The Law authorizing the construction of the work, passed May 2nd, 1834.

STEPHEN ALLEN, WILLIAM W. FOX, SAUL ALLEY,
CHARLES DUSENBERRY and BENJAMIN M. BROWN were appointed
Commissioners.

During the year 1834, two surveys were made—one by DAVID B. DOUGLASS and the other by JOHN MARTINEAU.

In April, 1835, a majority of the Electors of the City voted in favour of constructing the Aqueduct.

On the 7th May following, the *Common Council* "instructed the Commissioners to proceed with the work."

DAVID B. DOUGLASS was employed as *Chief Engineer* until October, 1836; when he was succeeded by JOHN B. JERVIS.

In March, 1837, BENJAMIN M. BROWN resigned, and was succeeded by THOMAS T. WOODRUFF.

In March, 1840, the before mentioned Commissioners were succeeded by SAMUEL STEVENS, JOHN D. WARD, ZEBEDEE RING, BENJAMIN BIRDSALL and SAMUEL R. CHILDS.

The work was commenced in May, 1837. On the 22nd June, 1842, the Aqueduct was so far completed that it received the Water from the Croton River Lake; on the 27th the Water entered the Receiving Reservoir and was admitted into this Reservoir on the succeeding 4th of July.

The DAM at the Croton River is 40 feet high, and the overfall 251 feet in length.

The CROTON RIVER LAKE is five miles long, and covers an area of 400 acres.

The AQUEDUCT, from the DAM to this Reservoir, is 40½ miles long, and will deliver in twenty-four hours 60,000,000 imperial gallons.

The capacity of the Receiving Reservoir is 150,000,000 gallons, and of this reservoir 20,000,000.

The cost, to and including this Reservoir, nearly \$9,000,000.

In the pavement of the south court is a tablet with this inscription:

**CROTON AQUEDUCT.
DISTRIBUTING RESERVOIR.**

COMMISSIONERS.

SAMUEL STEVENS
ZEBEDEE RING
JOHN D. WARD
BENJⁿ BIRDSALL
SAMUEL R. CHILDS

ENGINEERS.

JOHN B. JERVIS. CHIEF.
H^o ALLEN, PRIN^l ASSIST.
P. HASTIE, RESIDENT.

BUILDERS.

THOMSON PRICE & SON.

COMMENCED A. D. MDCCCXXXVIII.

COMPLETED A. D. MDCCCXLII.

[80]

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