



The Boylston Hall Library

Citation

McNiff, Philip J. 1950. The Boylston Hall Library. Harvard Library Bulletin IV (3), Autumn 1950: 411-413.

Permanent link

<https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37363451>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

to the press immediately following the composition of C₄ recto, possibly the discovery was not made until the compositor came to set C₄ verso, by which time a number of white-paper sheets of C would have been printed off. The matter is of little importance, however, except as it may bear on the fact that the error was not rectified by the compositor of C scrapping his setting of C₄ recto and resetting it and C₄ verso in the 82 mm. type, which would have squeezed in the necessary remaining text.³ Instead, what is interesting is the manner by which the printer economically solved the problem. Since the evidence of the skeleton-formes indicates that sheet D was not put on the press until sheet C had been wrought off, one way of repairing the situation would have been to begin sig. D₁ recto with the text omitted from C₄ verso. This could not be done, however, without breaking up and rearranging the already composed type-pages of D, for long galleys are unknown at this time. That

³ Even if no copies of sheet C had been printed, this resetting would have delayed the presswork and would thus have been uneconomical.

the printer was unwilling to engage himself to this process is demonstrated by the time-saving operation he adopted instead.

Observing that Tournon's entrance and speech led directly to the text of the first page of sheet D as it had been set, he discovered that Marguerite's long speech 'Away, you have combin'd to ruine me . . .' could be omitted in favor of the missing material. A reprinting from standing type of the necessary text from leaf C₄ could be combined on D₁ with the new bridge speeches, and C₄ could be canceled. By this means original type-page D₁ recto could become D₂ recto with a change in signing, and the first forme of reimposed sheet D could be sent to the press without further ado.

This bibliographical account explains in mechanical terms the omission of Marguerite's speech as an unauthoritative alteration. The correct text of the *Princess of Cleve*, therefore, should restore the passage by conflating the text of C₄ verso with D₁ verso so that none of the lines, which were certainly present in the manuscript, will be lost.

FREDSON BOWERS

The Boylston Hall Library

WITH the completion of the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library in 1915, it was believed that Harvard's library problem was solved for some time to come. On the ground floor of the new building, on the west side, was located the Lower Reading Room. A tutorial collection was shelved in Room O on the top floor. The rapid expansion of the book collection first caused the

moving of the tutorial collection to the Lower Reading Room and by the mid-twenties the Treasure Room was in need of more stack and reader accommodations.

In the 1927/28 report of the Director of the University Library, we read: 'Further space for some of our books and room for certain departments of the Library will be afforded by the projected move to Boylston Hall. The

bindery will be moved to a suitable annex, and the Lower Reading Room will be shifted to the lower floor of Boylston. The removal of the Lower Reading Room will give us an opportunity to expand the present narrow confines of the Treasure Room.¹ The Seventy-ninth Report of the Committee of the Overseers to Visit the University Library noted that 'we shall also gain a certain amount of leeway when we occupy the lower floor of Boylston Hall, whither the Lower Reading Room and the Chinese Collection are to be transferred.'

In 1828, Ward Nicholas Boylston left a bequest which specified that a stone building be erected to house an Anatomical Museum and Library, a lecture room, and a Chemical Laboratory. The original building was completed in 1858, and a third-story addition was finished in 1871. The new Mallinckrodt Chemistry Laboratory on Oxford Street was occupied by the Chemistry Department in 1928, thus freeing the Boylston building for library and other purposes.

The *Harvard Crimson* of 27 September 1929 reported: 'The most recent renovation of Boylston Hall has resulted in the creation of a large well-lighted reading room on the first floor for the convenience of undergraduates in History 1. The old building, with its poor ventilation and antique equipment, was never designed for a chemistry laboratory; as a reading room, it is a great improvement over Lower Widener. On the same floor are found the volumes belonging to the Chinese Library, while on the second floor are lecture halls. The entire building has undergone a thorough process of cleaning and redecoration, so that the result is the acquisition by the Univer-

sity of an excellent set of halls and classrooms in the place of an unattractive, age-worn building.'

At the same time that the Boylston Reading Room was opened, the old Faculty Room on the second floor of the Harvard Union was fitted out as a supplementary reading room to take care of required reading in History 1 and Government 1.²

The removal of the Lower Reading Room from Widener to Boylston aided the temporary solution of Widener's space problem. The Boylston Hall collection at its maximum included 4,680 volumes in the History, Government and Economics Tutorial section, and 7,005 volumes of reserve and general reading. The facilities were very popular, but the good lighting of 1929 was soon outmoded, and the ventilation was not satisfactory. Within a short time, it was obvious that the move to Boylston was an intermediate step in an effort to improve library service for the undergraduates. One of the important innovations at Boylston was the introduction of an outside book return slot. As far as can be discovered this was the first one in use in any of the Harvard libraries; and served as the forerunner of the Widener and Lamont night book return features. Students could now return books to the library while it was closed, and this helped to reduce the number of books returned late.

The advent of World War II caused a large decrease in student enrollment. This required adjustments in library service as well as in other college activities. One of the first cutbacks made

²For an account of the Union Library see Robert W. Lovett, 'The Harvard Union Library, 1901 to 1948,' *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, II (1948), 230-237.

Widener & Library
in 1955

by the Library was the closing of the Boylston Hall Reading Room at the end of the 1941/42 academic year.

The transition of the University to a war-time footing saw increasing numbers of Army and Navy men attending classes. The Navy V-12 program used the same three-term year as the civilian undergraduates and their library service was taken care of in the Widener Reading Room. The Army Specialized Training Program consisted of twelve-week terms and these students followed a curriculum entirely designed for the programs being offered. Their study room and library use differed from the needs of the civilian and V-12 students. Boylston Hall Reading Room was reopened for the use of the Foreign Area and Language group of the A.S.T.P. students. Special books needed for the courses offered were purchased by the Army and placed on reserve. The A.S.T.P. group made heavy use of the room until the program ended.

With the return of peace and the influx of returning veterans, the College Library had rapidly to expand its facilities. By this time the new undergraduate library was being planned, but it would not be completed in time to take care of the peak load of post-war students. On 13 November 1945, the Boylston Hall Reading Room was reopened for regular student use. Some rearrangements were necessary to reduce the heavy burden then placed on the Widener Library. It was decided to shift all the closed reserve books for Economics 1 and Government 1 to the Harvard Union Library. This accomplished two things; first, it ensured the maximum use of the Union Library, and secondly, it freed book and reader space in Boylston, so that other reserve

collections could be transferred from Widener. The East Common Room on the second floor of the Union was set aside to take care of the overflow of readers from the Freshman Union and History libraries.

The books for several courses with large enrollments were sent to the Boylston Reading Room. These included the survey course in American history (History 5, now History 61), 'Principles of Popular Government' (Government 3, now Government 103), 'The National Government of the United States' (Government 7a, now Government 130). In addition, books for all courses on Far Eastern history and government were reserved there, so that they would be adjacent to the resources of the Chinese Library.

All these moves helped to lessen the pressure on Widener until the opening of the Lamont Library. During 1947 and 1948 the collections of the Boylston Reading Room, as well as those of the Harvard Union, were reprocessed and assimilated into the Lamont collection. And when Lamont opened its doors on 3 January 1949 the Boylston Hall Library went out of existence. Its books had either been transferred to Lamont or returned to Widener to be added to the research collections of the University.

The space thus freed was once again divided, redecorated, and made available to other units of the University. The entire first floor of Boylston Hall is now being used by the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the Department of Far Eastern Languages, and the Far Eastern Regional Studies Program.²

PHILIP J. McNIFF

² See 'Rearrangements in Boylston,' *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, III (1949), 447-448.

List of Contributors

KEYES D. METCALF, Professor of Bibliography, Director of the Harvard University Library, and Librarian of Harvard College

RICHARD S. KENNEDY, Instructor in English, University of Rochester

VINTON A. DEARING, Instructor in English, University of California at Los Angeles

E. LOUISE LUCAS, Librarian of the William Hayes Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University

CARL R. WOODRING, Instructor in English, University of Wisconsin

MARSHALL W. S. SWAN, Chief, Northern European Area, Public Affairs Staff, United States Department of State

HYDER E. ROLLINS, Gurney Professor of English Literature, Harvard University

WILLIAM H. BOND, Curator of Manuscripts in the Houghton Library, Harvard University

WILLIAM STEVENSON SMITH, Assistant Curator, Department of Egyptian Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Lecturer on Fine Arts, Harvard University, and Director of the American Research Center in Egypt

HERBERT BLOCH, Associate Professor of Greek and Latin, Harvard University

PHILIP HOFER, Lecturer on Fine Arts and Curator of Printing and Graphic Arts in the College Library, Harvard University

WILLIAM VAN LENNEP, Curator of the Theatre Collection in the Harvard College Library

FREDSON BOWERS, Professor of English Literature, University of Virginia

PHILIP J. MCNIFF, Assistant Librarian of the College Library in charge of the Lamont Library, Harvard University