The Radcliffe College Library after seventy-five years

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Accessibility
The Radcliffe College Library after Seventy-five Years

Some seventy-five years ago on Appian Way in what the Reverend Edward A. Rand described as 'a chocolate-colored, two-and-a-half story frame house, modest while ample, like a Shaker bonnet,'¹ the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women opened its doors in four rented rooms. One of these on the second floor was set aside as an apartment for the twenty-seven young ladies of the first class, where they could spend the time between recitations. Here some of the instructors left books of reference from time to time. This, then, was the beginning of the Radcliffe College Library, for it was the first meeting of students and joint use of books.

The early years of the library carry with them a special aura. There is something valiant and glorious in the struggles of the 'Harvard Annex,' as it was familiarly called, that the maturity of today cannot equal. It was, of course, the vision and courage of Miss Horsford, Mrs Agassiz, Mr Gilman, Miss Longfellow, and many others that made these years so fascinating in retrospect. Without their hard work and devotion there would have been no college and no library.

Books generate more books. Soon the Society was acquiring by gift and purchase the nucleus of a 'reference library,'² as it was called in all the early reports. The first money spent for books, the modest sum of $9, came in 1881. Yet the very next year saw $70 allocated, and the reference library had increased from the shelf of loaned books in the brown house at No. 6 Appian Way to 771 volumes that were already beginning to crowd the new college for space.

Among these first gifts were 160 volumes in memory of William Chance May, a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and from the Trustees of the Lydia Maria Child Fund more than 70 volumes, including a set of Mrs Child's works. These books reflected Mrs Child's interests and her trustees thought that she would herself have given such a group of books to the Society.

¹ In 'A Visit to the Harvard Annex,' Education, II (March-April 1882), 415.
Almost concurrently with the establishment of the apartment and the reference books began the use of Harvard libraries by the young ladies of the Society. This was born of necessity, for Harvard owned many books and the new institution did not. This use has persisted in an ever increasing degree to the present day, for no college could hope to equal in quality and size the book collection of the University.

In the beginning, a relatively large amount was expended each year for a male messenger, who went twice a day to Gore Hall to bring books for study by the girls in their apartment. Again at night he delivered books to their rooms and returned them to Gore Hall the next morning. This was definitely personal library service and a luxury that cost the Society only $44 in 1885.

This situation existed for some ten years, and then the President and Fellows of Harvard College, without solicitation and without the knowledge of the Society’s managers, voted that the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women should have the use of the Harvard College Library provided it paid for all loss of and injury to books. This vote has stood ever since, and was reaffirmed with the beginnings of coordinated education in 1944. Without the generosity of the President and Fellows and the librarians of the College and Departmental Libraries, Radcliffe students would not have been able to reap the full benefits of instruction by the faculty of Harvard University.

Gifts to the new library rapidly created both a space and a cataloguing problem. The first catalogue for 845 books was made by the students in 1883 at no cost to the Society. Yet, as any librarian of today would have conjectured, the very next year this was found to be inadequate, for it had become difficult for the students to find the particular volumes of the subjects they wanted to study. Here was the first problem of classification as well as of subject cataloguing.

This problem was solved by Miss Anna Carret, a student. Miss Carret asked the privilege (a doubtful one) of rearranging the entire library and making a careful catalogue after the plan of the Cambridge Public Library, with which her father had been long connected. Mr. and Miss Carret worked over the books all one summer, and then for the first time the Society had a library — of slightly over 1,000 volumes — catalogued and arranged so that it was a usable collection. Miss Carret continued her work with the library and took charge of the reserve books brought from Harvard. For this labor of love she was paid $25 a year, and thus became the Society’s first librarian.
Between 1883 and 1885, when the Carrets made their catalogue, the new and rapidly growing library had to be moved from the second-floor room of the Carret home at No. 6 Appian Way to the house on the corner of Garden Street and Appian Way (No. 4 Garden) where the Society had obtained additional classrooms. Again the books were placed on the second floor, in space referred to in reports as the small book room. The books stayed here briefly, for Fay House was acquired in 1885 and in the fall of that year the reference library and the physical laboratory were moved to the new headquarters of the Society. The library occupied two small reading rooms (both together were inadequate) and two small apartments for the librarian.

With the acquisition of more permanent quarters in Fay House, the Society began to think more about the functioning of the library and the adequacy of the book collection. There was need for more history books and the works of the English novelists. Agitation arose for a formal appropriation of funds for books each year. In 1886 the first library committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Miss Lillian Horsford, with power to nominate a librarian. This person was Miss Sarah L. Howe, who was librarian from probably 1888, when Miss Carret graduated, until 1892, when Miss Caroline Farley, the first of the long-term librarians, was appointed. It was Miss Farley who between 1892 and 1908 moved the library twice and watched over the planning of the present library building. Miss Farley, too, was the first person to be Librarian of Radcliffe College, for with the fifteenth academic year, 1893-94, the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women became Radcliffe College.

The tale of the library in Fay House was a repetition of its career on Appian Way and at No. 4 Garden. Growth was astronomical, and the weight of the library forced the College to strengthen the walls of Fay House. The Dean's Report for 1897-98 states: 'During the summer of 1893, it was found necessary to rebuild part of the original wall of Fay House, replacing the eight-inch wall by a twelve-inch wall. This was done at an expense of $2,000. — sorely against the grain of the House Committee.' Through the generosity of Miss Alice Longfellow the large room on the third floor of Fay House facing Garden Street was tastefully equipped with cushioned window seats and a fireplace; a basket was placed on the door for receiving books returned after hours.

*Annual Reports of the President and Treasurer of Radcliffe College, 1897-98, pp. 20-21.*
Immediately, the library flowed over into adjoining rooms, and the number of young ladies using the library at any one time was restricted to seventy-five. The move to the third floor of Fay House was in 1890, and just ten years later it had moved again to the Gilman Schoolhouse, which stood where the present library now is. Later the Schoolhouse was moved across the Yard to Garden Street.

These years saw the library grow from 3,000 volumes to 18,500 in 1901. Miss Farley acquired as a library assistant in 1894 Miss F. Kathleen Jones, who later was to have a distinguished career as director of the Massachusetts Department of Education, Division of Public Libraries. Again, in this period we see the beginnings of a student library committee; and the age-old problems of missing reserve books, of quiet in the library, and of disregard for the rights of fellow students began to raise their heads. The first formal college appropriation for books came in 1890-91. This was the modest sum of $750; and cries for an adequate appropriation and for reference books were raised by librarian, students, and faculty.

The students were not enthusiastic about the removal of the library to the Gilman Schoolhouse, even though the view of the sunset compensated somewhat for the loss of the fireplace and the window seats in Fay House. A small book stack in the cellar, two reading rooms on the second floor, the librarian’s room, the reserve book room, and a small reference room housed the 18,500 volumes that the College had acquired in the twenty-one years of its existence. The library and the physical laboratories dominated Gilman.

Almost before the books had settled on the shelves in the Gilman Schoolhouse, agitation arose for a separate library building. In 1904 a circular was sent by a committee of alumnae to every alumna. Two paragraphs of this letter outline the building they hoped to erect. These set forth the requirements for a working library for the daily needs of the students, and suggest that $250,000 be raised, of which $125,000 be spent for a building, $20,000 for furnishings, and the remainder for maintenance.

President Briggs in his Annual Report for 1903-04 quoted from the circular and commented: ‘... I can add little to its appeal. The Radcliffe Library is so managed as to give students free access to all the books, and is therefore a living power such as many libraries are not. The Radcliffe Alumnae are earnest, helpful, and eager that their Alma Mater shall do even more for their successors than she did for them;
but since few of them are wealthy, they can undertake nothing more than the equipment of a library given by others, — and the task of finding these others.1

In June 1905 came the welcome news that Andrew Carnegie would give $75,000 for a library building provided an equal endowment for the building be raised. A campaign to this end started off with a contribution of $5,000, and by March 1906 the entire amount had been subscribed, although the $20,000 for furnishings was still to be found.

The special efforts by the alumnæ to raise money were vigorous and ingenious. At a country fair in Milton $1,100 was realized; the alumnæ performance of The Pirates of Pénzance brought $2,300; likewise, The Mikado in Jordan Hall brought in $2,000 for furnishings; a music recital by a single alumna produced $175; and the 424 young ladies of the College gave $1,023. The struggle was valiant, but by December 1906 part of the money still had to be raised.

Even though all of the funds had not been assured, Henry Forbes Bigelow of Winslow and Bigelow had been working on building plans. Arthur A. Shurtleff had surveyed the college grounds, and, following his scheme for their development, it was decided to make the library balance the gymnasium, with portico connection to Agassiz House on the south similar to that of the gymnasium on the north. Two other sites were discussed for the library, one on the Greenleaf property across Brattle Street and the other in the center of the Yard, for a circular building. Both of these were rejected in favor of a massive group of buildings that would turn their backs on the surrounding streets.

The building committee under the chairmanship of Dean Irwin instructed Mr Bigelow to provide the College with an open-shelf library after the manner of the new library at Clark University in Worcester. The advice of the able and enthusiastic librarian at Clark, Louis N. Wilson, was sought by the committee, and he gave them and the architect valuable aid. The proposed building was to have a capacity of 60,000 volumes, and was to seat at least 200 readers at one time, with due regard to utility, simplicity, the greatest amount of light, the smallest of draughts, perfect ventilation, noiseless floors — all within the monetary limits of Mr Carnegie’s gift.

On the whole, in retrospect, Mr Bigelow designed a functional build-

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1 Annual Reports of the President and Treasurer of Radcliffe College, 1903–04, pp. 18-19.
ing, which has undergone remarkably few changes. The specifications for few draughts and perfect ventilation were perhaps the most poorly executed part of his plans, but certainly the ventilation standards of 1907 are not those of modern forced ventilation.

Mr. Bigelow’s original book capacity of 60,000 volumes has been expanded again and again by building more bookcases and by sacrificing space for readers on the third floor. On the other hand, his original plan for a three-tier book stack on the south side of the building to house 100,000 volumes has never been adopted, and part of this area now forms a large reading room. At the moment, the building shelves approximately 105,000 volumes, and the only possible area for physical expansion lies in the proposed balcony between the second and third floors. According to architectural estimates this has always been considered too expensive for the space that would be gained.

The new building, when it was finished in 1908, was judged imposing, with two large reading rooms on the second and third floors, 96 by 50 feet, and each seating 200 readers (see Plate I). On the first floor, a room on the west side of the building was given as a memorial room to Mrs. Sarah Wyman Whitman and in it was placed the window designed by Mrs. Whitman for the St. Louis Fair in 1904. The room was furnished by her friends in Italian Renaissance style. It was felt that this room would express the donors’ tribute to Mrs. Whitman as an outstanding woman and artist and a devoted friend of the College.

Finally, the books were moved from the Gilman Schoolhouse by a pulley carrying book boxes to the second-floor windows; and on Monday, 27 April 1908, the building was in use. It was open for inspection from 2:00 to 6:00, and at 4:30, in Agassiz auditorium, Dr. John Shaw Billings of the New York Free Library spoke on “The Uses of a Library.” In his address, Dr. Billings urged the establishment of rooms for reading for pleasure, or browsing rooms, in a college. It was a revolutionary thought at the time, and it inspired the furnishing and planning of the assign room on the first floor named the Irwin Room in honor of Miss Irwin, first Dean of Radcliffe. The day of the dedication was also made the occasion of the first meeting of the New England College Librarians at Radcliffe. Miss Farley and her staff undoubtedly exhibited with pleasure and satisfaction the new home of the Radcliffe College Library to their colleagues.

With the dedication of the new building the early years of the Radcliffe Library closed. It had struggled, grown, and reached adulthood.
Unfortunately, Miss Farley, who had guided it through the pains of childhood, did not remain librarian to enjoy her new building and to reap the full satisfaction that the completion of adequate quarters brought her, for ill health forced her resignation.

Miss Lucy A. Paton, the first holder of a doctorate from Radcliffe, became acting librarian for a year. Miss Paton’s interest in the library continued through later years, however, and the book collection is the richer for her many and carefully selected gifts.

In 1909, Miss Paton handed over her stewardship to Miss Rose Sherman, who became the second of the Radcliffe librarians to serve a long and continuous administrative term. Miss Sherman, a Radcliffe alumna and a graduate of the Library School of Simmons College, was ably qualified for the post, with experience in other libraries before her appointment as librarian of her own college. For some eighteen years she guided the library and developed its book collections with wisdom and care. The excellent collections of English and foreign literatures are largely the product of her foresight. Miss Sherman was essentially a bookwoman, and Radcliffe students today have cause to be grateful to her.

About 1912, Miss Sherman brought into being a vocal student library committee. It is amusing today to read the old Radcliffe News, with its spirited discussions of library problems. These are the familiar ones — lost books, noise, proper use of the browsing room, reserve book offenders, mutilations, and so forth. The discussions in student government meetings and in the News waxed hot and heavy, with shades of moral overtones. Finally, it was agreed that student government chastisement was ineffective, and the first fines for misdemeanors were instituted. Even though there had been talk about noise and misuse of library books in the early years of the College, the students of the first thirty-odd years deserve a vote of commendation that no rigorous penalties had to be established in their day.

Student agitation with respect to the library took a new form in 1919. Pressure from a mass meeting demanded that the library be opened in the evening. Since this involved a budgetary as well as an administrative decision, the Council of the College deliberated on the request, finally refusing it. Agitation for evening hours, especially in the examination period, continued, however; and in 1921 Mrs Farlow gave $100 to open the reserve book room from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Friday from January through March. The hours from
that date have gradually been extended so that during the college year
the library is now open from Monday through Friday from 8:45 A.M.
to 10:00 P.M., and on Saturdays from 8:45 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. In 1924-
55, the library was kept open on a non-service basis on Sunday after-
oons during reading and examination periods, and it was used by
many students as a place to study.

In 1919, too, the building again began to bother. Space was at a
premium. The proposed balcony for 20,000 volumes on the second
floor was considered and rejected because of labor troubles and lack of
money. However, the library committee did recommend the construc-
tion of a vault, a book elevator, bookcases in the librarian’s office, and
stacks in the basement for bound periodicals. Money was found for
these projects and they were completed. The basement stacks, espe-
cially, formed a large storage area.

The original plans for the building had called for a three-tier stack
rising out of the basement through the first floor. This was to have
shelved 100,000 volumes. However, this plan was thwarted in 1914
by the placing of a temporary floor in the first-floor south room to per-
mit the establishment of the Collard (later the Fiske) Room as a reserve
book reading room. The library lost in book storage space, but it
gained in space for readers.

The opening of the Collard Room was the real beginning of the
reserve book system at Radcliffe. With it came trials and tribulations
to both the students and the library staff. Today, it is inconceivable
how any undergraduate college could fulfill the reading required for
courses without reserve books; but the library staff could not have
dreamed of today’s octopus when the Fiske (or Collard) Room was
first opened. Losses and the desire to establish a perfect reserve system
forced a tightening of the rules in 1920. Complaints from students
were renewed in the next few years, and the system was revised again
in 1927. Each time a major change was made, student opinions were
aired loudly both pro and con.

While required reading for courses plays a major part in the Rad-
dcliffe Library, the growth of the general book collection from the first
shelf on Appian Way was constant. The original 60,000-volume ca-
pacity of the building was reached long before 1919. This was allevi-
ated somewhat by the new shelving in the basement in that year and by
new shelves in the Irwin Room.

Most of the congestion came from normal book purchases, but part
The Radcliffe College Library

of it came from the ever continuing and welcome gifts which the library has received from people interested in the growth of the College and its resources and from its loyal alumnae. Many of these gifts have been in the rare book field. In this second period, Radcliffe received three important bequests of several thousand books from the estates of George Leverett, Mrs Julian de Cordova, and Margaret Coleman Waite. The Waite collection consisted chiefly of classics, part of which was placed in a memorial library in Briggs Hall. Professor William Parsons Atkinson was a notable donor, and his collection of anti-slavery books gives an unusual distinction to a college library.

Besides growing through gifts, the Radcliffe Library has grown also through the appropriations by the College and from funds given by friends, alumnae, and students. There is no annual report that does not record a monetary gift or two. Even money for a single book has enriched the collection and contributed to the book resources for the students. From the very first general appropriation for books by the College, the administration has provided funds to purchase books even in years of war and depression.

The purchase of books has, however, fluctuated in terms of educational policies. The institution of reading periods in 1927–28 brought great changes. To provide for the first two reading periods, over $800 had to be expended for books, and large purchases of duplicates were made for English, history, philosophy, and the sciences. Increased demand for books for intensive reading in a brief period meant greater duplication than the library had previously provided. Larger purchases coupled with increased intensive use brought greater pressure upon the library staff. This new development was directly reflected in increased reserve book circulation.

The very next year, 1927, saw another major change in the method of instruction: the introduction of the tutorial system. The Tutorial House was established on Appian Way, and more duplicates and standard works in the various fields were placed on its shelves. The librarians greeted this as a welcome means of relieving the crowded condition of the shelves, but actually the number of books transferred to the Tutorial House was small. Tutorial brought its problems of purchases and losses as well as its blessing of temporary relief to a few crowded sections.

Consolidation and great growth characterized the second twenty-five years of the Radcliffe College Library. The period began with a
new librarian and a new and almost empty building. It ended with a new librarian, but full shelves. Miss Georgiana Ames, who became Mrs. Thomas L. Hinckley in 1939, was appointed just in time to meet the new demands of a changing curriculum and to exercise her ingenuity in managing a crowded building.

Miss Ames immediately approached the problem of space in the library by proposing a series of alternatives, consisting of a balcony in the second-floor reading room, the original three-tier stack from the basement, an addition to the library, or reduction by limiting yearly purchases. The last was unfeasible because a library built around courses cannot refuse to buy books requested by the faculty. All during the 1930's and early 1940's the problem of space was wrestled with and a few alleviating measures were taken. Shelves were built in the storage rooms; space was rented in the new New England Deposit Library; stacks were erected in the center of the third floor; and several plans were drawn for an addition. The last progressed as far as architectural drawings, but World War II canceled all hopes for an addition in the near future.

The war was a time of special stress. Enrollments were smaller, reading lists were less varied, books were hard to get, and the procurement of new staff was difficult. Mrs. Hinckley, with her core of older staff members, fought a valiant holding action; and she faced the staff replacement problem with ingenuity and courage. Wage freezes, special war courses, inadequate heating, and other trials of total national emergency required great fortitude.

With the end of the war came the full development of coordinated education, which meant the admission of women to all Harvard classes under the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the end of separate classes for women only at Radcliffe. At the same time came rising building costs and the construction of the new Lamont undergraduate library at Harvard. All of this forced on the College a reevaluation of the functions of the library. With coordinated education, the Radcliffe student received freer access to Widener for her research, which made it possible for the Radcliffe College Library to function primarily as a library for undergraduates, and to revalue its book collection in terms of materials needed for undergraduate and not for graduate instruction.

The opening of the Lamont Library also brought student criticism of existing conditions. Student pride and envy of the new library for
men caused great discontent. The Council of the College recognized
this, and also the need to modernize a building dating from 1908. A
committee under the chairmanship of Dean Kerby-Miller studied the
situation and with the advice of students prepared recommendations
for renovation of the building. Lighting, heat, a new circulation desk,
new furniture, quiet floors, and paint were primary objectives. The
major items of expense were the lighting and the removal of an obsolete
chimney and a solid wall on the first floor. This and the renovation of
the Fiske Room for reserve books were carried out in the summer of
1950.

Before the completion of this work the College received an anony-
mos gift of $100,000 for the library. Half of this was funded to pur-
close books for the new General Education program (discussed be-
low), and the remainder was used to complete the renovation. A new
insulated roof, floors, furniture, paint, and a browsing room com-
pletely redecorated in contemporary and comfortable furniture fin-
ished the alterations. The results were on the whole satisfactory,
making the Radcliffe Library a more pleasant and efficient place in
which to study (see Plate II).

The changes in the building worked a temporary hardship on the
staff, for the installation of the new circulation desk and the stacks for
closed reserve books behind it meant the giving up of all office space.
This would have been intolerable if the final major development of the
third twenty-five years of the library had not been on the architectural
drawing boards — the building of Holmes Hall.

When in 1940 Mrs Georgine Holmes Thomas left money to the
College for the erection of a music building, the development of music
at Radcliffe was in its greatest period of growth, and coordinated edu-
cation was far in the future. Prior to World War II, plans were drawn
for this building, which was to include a music library. The coming of
the war and later joint instruction prevented their fruition. Since Rad-
ciffe needed a dormitory more than a music building, it was decided
to build the dormitory in the quadrangle off Linnecor Street, name it
Holmes Hall, and center there all the musical activities of the College.

The Susan Alice Ensign Morse Music Library, in Holmes Hall, has
provided a well coordinated library for both study and recreation.
Here are to be found books and scores, records, group and individual
listening facilities, and rooms for instrumental practicing. These rooms
combined with the practice rooms in Moors Hall and in Agassiz House offer the student musician unusual opportunities.

Radio Radcliffe has its studio adjacent to one of the listening rooms of the Morse Library; here live broadcasts take place evenings. Another activity sponsored by the College is a chamber music group, which meets in the Morse reading room.

The Morse Music Library is a logical outcome of the interest in music which started at Radcliffe in the late 1920's with the appointment of Mme Nadia Boulanger. Her work in 1927 and 1928 stimulated interest in music to such an extent that a music library became necessary. This had a small beginning in the little conference room in the basement of the main library building. Under the guidance of Professor Woodworth and with financial backing from the Master School of Music Association, the collection of records and scores grew rapidly. In 1941, when the music building became an impossibility, the Whitman Room was converted from an art room to this activity. Here the music collection remained until the opening of the Morse Music Library in the fall of 1952.

While the music library is Radcliffe's chief departmental library, the past twenty-five years have seen other departmental libraries rise and depart. Chief of these was the science library in Byerly Hall. Byerly was built in 1933 to provide adequate laboratories and classrooms for the teaching of science at Radcliffe. A large reading room and a stack area were provided to house a working science library for the women in this field. Much effort by Mrs Hinckley and her staff went into acquiring a good collection of science material. This was possible because of the Lillian Horsford Farlow Fund for the purchase of books in science. With the coming of joint instruction and the turning over of Byerly Hall to Harvard for instructional purposes, the science collection was broken up and either returned to the main library or sent to the New England Deposit Library. The Byerly library area was then taken over by the Women's Archive, then just inaugurated.

The Women's Archive, a collection of research materials showing the achievements of American women, was a logical outgrowth of the gift to the College of the Women's Rights Collection by Maud Wood Park. This was opened on 26 August 1943 in a room in Longfellow Hall attractively decorated in the style of the period that saw the fight for woman suffrage. Pictures of the women who led the fight, their memorabilia, and their papers and books have created a unique collec-
tion on suffrage for the College. Mrs Park, Miss Alice Stone Blackwell, Mrs Edna Stautial, and others gave manuscripts. This collection has proved of lasting value for research workers.

Three years later, on 15 November 1946, the Radcliffe News announced the opening of the Women's Archive in Byerly. Miss Mary E. Howard became the archivist, and with the guidance of Mrs Hinckley undertook the development of an all-embracing collection. Soon, gifts of books and the papers of prominent women such as Julia Ward Howe, Fanny Fern Andrews, and Judge Florence E. Allen began to arrive. Acquisitions were further stimulated by the appointment of a director, Mrs Elizabeth B. Borden, in the fall of 1950. While the Women's Archive now operates as an autonomous unit, its function as a research center makes it a part of library activities at Radcliffe. The present relation between the Archive and the main library is a happy collaboration and one that augurs well for the future growth of the Archive.

Other library developments at Radcliffe in the 1940's saw the breaking up of the tutorial libraries in the Tutorial House. Tutorial work largely ceased during the war years, and these collections were no longer needed. When they were broken up, not much of value was left to transfer back to the main library, for the collections had suffered by attrition. All in all this was a costly experience. Demands for books arising from the recent revival of Tutorial are being handled by the main library, a procedure which is certainly less expensive and seems to meet the needs of the situation.

The breakup of Tutorial in the 40's led to the establishment of a small classics library in Longfellow Hall. This housed texts provided by the Department of Classics, some of the books from the Tutorial House, and a selection of background material from the main library. The collection was open to students in the classics field, who were given keys to the room. In 1951, the Radcliffe Alumnae Association moved to Longfellow Hall, and, since it needed this space, the collection was broken up. Use of it was small and a classics library for a small group of students was a luxury which the College could not afford.

In 1949 came a major shift in the personnel of the library. Mrs Hinckley resigned as librarian and Miss Ruth K. Porritt was appointed to take her place. Several older people who had worked for the College for twenty-five years or more, including Miss Julia M. Johnson, the cataloguer, and Miss Florence G. Finley, order librarian, also re-
tired. Thus the fall of 1949 saw a new librarian and an almost entirely new staff.

Among the other changes that followed upon World War II was the development of the General Education program. This has meant tremendous purchases of duplicate copies of books, especially for the Social Science courses. Many materials have been mimeographed by the General Education Office, and their shelving and circulation have created bibliographic and space problems. Also, the Natural Science courses have employed unusual historical science materials, so that there have been problems of acquisition as well. Each new course in the General Education program poses its new requirements, which keeps the library alert. The anonymous fund for purchases of books for General Education courses, already mentioned, has made possible adequate book supplies. The special value of the program with its required reading and essay topics is that it brings all students to the library and requires their use of the collection beyond the reserve book reading for individual courses.

In the last twenty-five years, the invested book funds of the library have increased until now over half of the money for the book budget comes from this source. This is particularly true of the years since 1940. Each gift of a fund removes some financial burden from the general funds of the College. Each current gift of money adds a book or books to the collection that otherwise could not be purchased. In view of mounting costs of books, the income from these funds is most important, and without them the College would be hard put to keep its collection up to date. However, it must be said that the administration of the College has always recognized the need for books, and never has the library been cramped for adequate book funds.

The past twenty-five years have also seen many notable gifts of books to the College. Large collections that require special mention are the Georgine Holmes Thomas gift of music, the Stewart Mitchell collection, especially notable for its history, literature, and art books, and the Margaret Foster Herrick collection of nineteenth-century works of literature and history. All of these contain many rare and valuable items. Many smaller but no less important gifts have also come to the library. The Frederick music books, gifts for the Radcliffe Archives, gifts from Miss Lucia Briggs's library, and many others have enriched the collection.

On an afternoon during hour examinations, reading period, or final
examinations, the Radcliffe Library is a very busy place. Women are everywhere, and the circulation desk is thronged with students. To serve these students promptly, to give them the precise books they desire at the moment they are needed, is the basic function of the library.

The Radcliffe Library does not expect to grow unless there is an increase in enrollment. Moreover, it is conducting an active discarding program to keep the size of its book collection within the limits of 100,000 volumes, recently defined as adequate for an undergraduate library. This is extremely difficult, for the library already contains 105,000 volumes. In addition, approximately some 5,000 volumes are in the Women’s Archive in Byerly Hall and 5,000 volumes in the Morse Music Library. Radcliffe College is decidedly a living institution at the end of its seventy-fifth year. With age come increased responsibilities for its records, for the distinguished gifts of its alumnae, and for the preservation of its book collection. The library, the constituted guardian of these things, assumes responsibility for them as well as for the provision of good service to the current student body. 4

RUTH K. PORRITT

4 This account of the Radcliffe College Library has been read by Mrs. Georgiana Ames Hinckley, Librarian 1917-49. I am grateful to her for her helpful suggestions and information about the past that only she could give.
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