

THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



ANNUAL REPORT 1990-1991

THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
Annual Report

For the Year Ending June 30, 1991



Document 15

The Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston

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of
The City of Boston**

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ANNUAL REPORT FY91

As the Queen expressed it in Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, "It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

The Queen's remarks aptly describe the pattern of the Library's FY91. The year was characterized by building on the efforts of the prior years: advancing in automation and preservation, restoration of the McKim building, programming and exhibitions, and responsiveness to patrons' needs. The forward motion was accomplished in the face of obstacles related to budget reduction, increased materials costs, and staff and space shortages.

The two major themes of the year for the Research Library office were planning for budget reductions and planning for the renovation of the McKim building. The thrust of budget planning was to preserve public service as much as possible. As a result, greatest losses were in staffing special collections, the areas which make the Library a major research institution throughout the world, but invite less general public, day-to-day usage.

Budget planning commenced in November and continued throughout the year. There were dramatic cuts in several departments. The reassignment of all staff of the Jordan Collection was necessitated by proposed budget losses as was the cutback of staff in the Print Department and in the Kirstein Business Branch, also the continuing vacancies in the Conservation Laboratory, the Fine Arts Department, and the Research Library office—all described by the assistant director for resources and processing as "debilitating."

Planning for remote storage of materials has been an activity that grows in importance. The necessity to plan because of the renovation of the McKim building has meant that we have gathered more information, done more charts, and thought

more about the long term space needs of the Library than we may otherwise have done. We have used the personal computer to build a database of information that includes materials stored presently in various locations, quantified in linear or cubic feet required for storage, where such materials will need to be moved, whether repacking, storage in cartons or on shelves, special handling, or special storage conditions are needed. This database has already proved very valuable in making arrangements for the storage of materials in the Charlestown Service Building.

In its status as a major research library in the nation, several years the Library has concentrated on preservation needs. With the creation of a modern conservation library, with leadership in the region in state-of-the-art methods and equipment, and with the production of an instructive video cassette on conservation, the Library has moved ahead in insuring the longevity of rare items.

Continuing a project begun in FY90, representatives from the entire staff of the Library participated in the Preservation Self-Study sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries, but the greatest emphasis of the study was on research Library materials and staff. A six-member study team began work in the fall on a background paper. When that was completed, five task forces were appointed to study specific areas of need. These task forces worked from fall to early March when they made their reports to the study team. The team then began to prepare the final report, which will be published by the Association of Research Libraries. It is hoped that this study will be a major tool for the Library to use in the next several years in determining priorities for preservation activities. The study also became a staff development opportunity with a project structure already identified to help staff members formulate goals, do research, and come up with conclusions in a fairly short period of time. Many people who worked on the study were impressed

with what they themselves had accomplished so it also became a vehicle of confidence-building.

Another extremely important preservation project was the awarding by the U.S. Department of Education of a grant to the Boston Public Library under the Strengthening Research Libraries program for cataloging and preservation of selected items in the Allen A. Brown Music Collection. This grant for \$123,733 will enable the Library to preserve some items that have been withdrawn from service because they are so fragile. It will enable the Library to catalog on a national database all the items from the collection that have already been filmed so that scholars throughout the country will have access to them. The grant becomes a reaffirmation of the importance of the Boston Public Library's unique special collections.

A key achievement this year was the completed conservation of the John Adams Collection. When the conservation laboratory in the Rare Book Department was established in 1981 with a grant from the Office of Higher Education, Title II, work commenced immediately on the personal library of the second president of the United States. All three thousand volumes were in conditions mandating conservation attention. In FY91 *all* volumes have become accessible to scholars. In celebration of the completed task an exhibit was mounted with photographs of items *before* restoration and the volumes themselves *after* restoration. Three descendants of John Adams attended the reception which opened the exhibition.

Evidence of the Electronic Age

The opportunities presented by the electronic age became more and more visible this year as the Research Library departments became more involved in on-line searching, the use of CD-ROM databases, and the electronic links to other library catalogs and databases. On-line access to the Boston Library Consortium Union List promises to be a great advantage in helping patrons

with information on periodical holdings. It is expected that in the coming year the Index to State and Local Documents, prepared by the Government Documents Department, will be available on-line. The three CD-ROM workstations installed at Kirstein Business Branch are regularly in use, and other departments are asking for workstations.

This demonstrated need to acquire databases and equipment has had major impact on the acquisitions budget since funds for electronic sources are taken from funds formerly used to purchase books. The number of books purchased is sharply curtailed as a growing percentage of the already limited funds is spent for computers, modems, discs, telecommunications, and access to databases. Staff training in the use of these new sources is also costly.

The changing technology has altered user expectations considerably. Reference staff note that patrons demand ever quicker, ever more detailed and sophisticated information, and want answers to questions rather than knowledge of how to find the answers. The impact is felt when more professional meetings are devoted to resource sharing since it is impossible to buy everything, and new technology makes sharing more feasible. Research Library staff have been involved in committees of the Boston Library Consortium and Board of Library Commissioners that are focused on resource sharing. Each Research Library department now has at least one electronic piece of equipment and many have several.

This year saw continued development in the area of applying computer technology to services and operations in Community Library Services. During the year, retrospective barcoding was completed on the collections of nine more branch libraries. As of this time, 18 of the 25 branches, in addition to the central library, are offering fully automated circulation services on the new DRA system.

Early in the year, the DRA system use was expanded to include the "reserve" system component. This means that a

reserve request for a patron anywhere in the system can now be filled with any copy from the central library or a branch. As a result of this system, the waiting lists and waiting time for very popular titles such as best sellers have been dramatically reduced, and at some sites, eliminated. From Adams Street Branch came a commentary repeated frequently: "All our public, young and old, now make wide use of the computerized reserve system. Previously, it was rare for a child to reserve a book. Now it is becoming routine through the wonders of barcoding. It has also affected the type of books reserved. Before it was mainly best sellers. With the advent of the computer, older titles and more diverse titles are ordered. The collection has literally been open up to the public, and is used more widely than ever."

The newest development in the Audio-Visual Department was the circulation of the compact disc collection. In addition, the circulation of audio-cassettes and recordings has continued to increase.

Microcomputer technology was or will be added at four sites in Community Library Services. An APPLE computer and "Book Brain" software were added to the resources of the central library's children's room through a "Boston Works Smarter" award. Based on answers given by the child to a series of questions that define reading levels and interests, this computer software can be used by a child to compile lists of books to read. Also as a result of a "Boston Works Smarter" award, a microcomputer was installed in the Mobile Library Services Department. With the eventual addition of database management software, the computer will allow staff to automate complex records of reading interests and histories of homebound individuals whom the department serves.

Local businessman Reinhard Goethert presented the Brighton Branch Library with an APPLE II Plus computer and software for use by children. The computer and games have been very popular with children ranging in age from 3 to 14.

A grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners under the LSCA Title I program was awarded to the Access Center for a second phase of technological development. Through this grant, access will be provided for disabled patrons to CD-ROM reference materials and eventually to the Library's on-line public access catalog, through the use of an IBM compatible computer and large print, Braille, and speech peripherals.

Exhibitions and Programming

The Research Library departments, General Library, and branches continued to acquaint the public with the richness and diversity of the Library's collections through exhibitions. "Marching to the Tune of the Union" was inspired by Ken Burns's *Civil War*. "Politics and Polkas" was timed to coincide with the gubernatorial election. A list of exhibits numbered in the hundreds. And the interests of adults, young adults, and children were represented in hundred of programs. For example, a series of workshops utilized puppetry and storytelling to highlight "Tales of Women in History." And for young adults, Sedric Jones of the New England Patriots described his life as an athlete. Suffice it to say that the device of capturing viewer and audience attention with imaginative, interpretive, timely exhibits and programs was pursued with a flourish.

Programs in central and branches repeatedly called on authors as speakers. Noting the accelerated importance of nonprint media, the special projects officer in central said: "No matter how modern and automated libraries become, most people still think of libraries as places where they can borrow books, and it is a major goal of library programs to enhance and promote books and their authors."

In still other programming efforts offered in cooperation with local groups, the annual lecture sponsored with the Society of Architectural Historians, New England, this year featured architect Gerhard Kallmann. And Harvard Professor Richard

Pipes spoke about his widely acclaimed book *The Russian Revolution*, and still with a Russian setting, Joseph Finder spoke on his thriller *The Moscow Club*. Art historian Henry Augustine Tate celebrated Valentine's Day with a lecture: "Arts, Hearts, and Valentines: The Theme of Lovers in Art from Ancient Times to the Contemporary Scene." The Calumet Quintet performed at the Library as part of the Library's announcement of the receipt of a grant of \$123,000 from the U.S. Department of Education for cataloging and microfilming the Brown Collection. Quintet members are regular users of the Music Department and performed at a much reduced performance fee.

The Rare Book Department celebrated the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Boston Authors Club with a lecture, reception, and an exhibit. The traditional Dwiggin's Lecture was offered this year by Keeper of Prints Sinclair H. Hitchings. Columbus was approached from a Spanish point of view with a lecture by Professor Francisco Morales Patron from the University of Seville.

Grants and Gifts

More than \$1,000,000 in grants was received by the Library in FY91, including \$400,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the bibliographic implementation phase of the Massachusetts Newspaper Program; a grant of \$123,000 for the cataloging and preservation of materials from the Allen A. Brown Collection; the fourth payment of a \$1 million pledge from the Boston Globe Foundation directed to the endowment for literacy and reading enhancement programs; \$50,000 from the Associates of the Boston Public Library targeted for special collections and projects; a grant of \$75,000 from the SURDNA Foundation for a visiting scholar to work on prints; almost \$20,000 for the Access Center to expand its computer technology; \$2,036 from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities for a joint project between the Library and the Handel & Hayden Society to microfilm concert programs and

scrapbook materials; and 27 passes to the Museum of Science (valued at \$13,500), a gift from the Lowell Institute.

A grant of \$119,750 (LSCA Title III) was received by the Boston Library Consortium that will allow the Library access to NEARnet (New England Academic Research Network); also received by the Consortium was a grant of \$195,734 from the Higher Education Act for Library Technology that will support the installation of a computer system and components to serve as a platform for Union List searching.

A substantial number of major gifts was received this year, among them: a splendid copy of *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll, illustrated by Barry Moser; *Surinomo: Prints by Elbow*, a limited edition with special paper and bindings related to the graphic arts; volumes 1-7 of *Louis I. Kahn Archives: Completely Illustrated Catalogue of the Drawings in the Louis I. Kahn Collection*; the archives of Impressions Workshop, gift of Stephen Andrus; a portfolio, *Stone with the Angel*, poems by Leo Bronstein and ten lithographs by Arthur Polansky; a limited facsimile edition of *The Book of Kells*, gift of Daniel Rea; 40 newspapers from 1828-1898, including the *New York Times* April 1865 edition reporting the assassination of President Lincoln; and hundreds of other important gifts.

The gift items received in FY91 numbered 26,309 and represented the full range of formats: hardcovers, paperbacks, magazines, newspapers, records, cassettes, videos, compact discs, sheet music, and more. Gifts were checked against the holdings of the Library for titles not already in the collection and also underwent comparative checking with materials already in the Library to determine the better items. A total of 10,310 were added to the Research Library including 82 items which merited inclusion in the Rare Book Department.

Behind-the-Scenes/Book Activities

Before the books and other materials appear on shelf there is much behind-the-scenes preparation: from examination of new

books for ordering consideration, then ordering, then cataloging, and finally physical preparation of the item for circulation or research use.

Numbers of acquisitions this year diminished. Although the Library budgets in FY90 and FY91 were not significantly different, the purchasing power of the present year was lower. Inflation, the high cost of non-print material, and the number of non-book bibliographic services cut into the book budget. The range of what is broadly referred to as "books" is broad: works for adults and children, from major publishers, universities, and small presses; U.S. and foreign, current and replacement titles, paperbacks and large print books.

Added to the print materials here described are the essential serials acquisitions. The Library remains in the forefront of serials control with a planned installation of INNOVACQ, which goes well beyond a check-in system by offering managerial reports and the ability to tapeload invoice information. Budget restrictions led this year to the curtailment of many serial orders. Mentioned earlier, in terms of budget allocation for materials acquisition, is the considerable percentage now dedicated to CD ROM subscriptions.

During FY91 the Library purchased 50,576 titles and 152,387 volumes. The Library added 18 CD ROM products and 14 new Infotrac work stations.

The work of Automated Cataloging Support encompassed several operations in addition to generating cards and labels for the Library, the Eastern Region deposit centers, and the approximately 55 members of the CCP (Cooperative Cataloging Program). The department conducted ongoing development for the new SPECTRUM system for the CCP and gave demonstrations. More work remains to be done before the system becomes operational.

Staff training was provided on PRISM, OCLC's new on-line cataloging and searching database. In continuing support of other OCLC services, the department busily implemented new

software programs, handled hardware trouble-shooting, telecommunications programs, installation of new equipment, and writing and distribution of documentation. A few statistics demonstrate the intensive activity of the department: total catalog cards produced numbered 1,005,944, and 281,197 labels.

The Book Preparation section prepared book and non-book materials (cassettes, mixed media, books on tapes, sound recordings) for circulation in an effort that included barcoding and relabeling. A total of 280,959 items were "prepped" in FY91.

Resources and Processing managed several activities that enhanced the organization, preservation, and accessibility of materials already part of the Library's holdings. Completed in December 1990 was a project, supported by the Library Services and Construction Act, which had begun in August 1989. This project led to the processing of a backlog of some 30,000 volumes. In still another effort, the preparation of the inventory of nonprint items in the Joan of Arc Collection continued. Targeted for the inventory are more than 500 pieces—pictures, figural items, and other nonprint items in the gift from John Cardinal Wright. In the Brown Collection project, attention was given to the cataloging of music scores, to technical implications, and to formulation of protocols.

The Massachusetts Newspaper Program advanced this year with completion of the cataloging of all titles (a total of 1,663) held on microfilm by the Library, as well as many Boston newspapers on film (463). In related activities, the Library generated interest in the project with the exhibit of the only extant copy of *Publick Occurrences*; participated in a panel sponsored by the New England Press Association; and took part in a program of the New England Library Association on the regional newspaper projects.

A major book-centered activity is the Interlibrary Loan/Catalog Information Department. In FY91, the proverbial

wires buzzed with thousands of transactions. Aided by the DRA automated circulation/reserve system and facsimile transmission, staff were able to supply patron requests throughout the Library branch system and Eastern Regional System.

Testament to the accelerated response to patron requests were the repeated acknowledgments: a 96-year-old blind woman on Cape Cod was “happy to remember again” a verse by Edwin Markham; A Foxborough patron gratefully acknowledged receiving a needed article from the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in one day. In FY91 Massachusetts public libraries were sent 26,497 items; non-public libraries, 5,597 items. Information conveyed by Catalog Information reached a total of 28,253 phone calls, and staff answered 22,813 ready reference questions. Key words in Interlibrary Loan as it shipped books, FAXes, and answers by phone are “fill Rate” and “turnaround time.” The statistics for both were positive in FY91—and mounting.

To the reader, the researcher, and the visitor, the Library emerges as the center of books, exhibits, and programs. To make such materials and services possible, the Library is necessarily a major business operation. Behind the scenes, the Business Office, supported by Accounting, handles the full spectrum of contract management, ordering of all supplies—everything from pencils and paper towels to acid-free storage containers and snow removal equipment to the books themselves. All the steps of acquisition include shipping arrangements, storage, and inventory control, and, of course, the receipt, payment, and eventual auditing of the costs encumbered.

The Shipping Department is charged with the in and out flow of mail, library materials, supplies, and equipment. The processes include receiving, sorting, and distributing arriving materials. Shipping serves all central library units, branch libraries, members of the Eastern Regional Library System, and the Boston Library Consortium. Daily delivery service this year

handled 79 locations on four truck routes. The department processed 208,752 pieces through the U.S. Postal System. The central library received approximately 1,250,000 pieces of mail. In response to requests for items from central and branches, the stock room of the Shipping Department received 1,200 supply requisitions requesting approximately 12,912 items of which 93% were supplied.

A busy arm of the Business Office is the Duplicating Section that is charged with the production of print items: flyers, invitations, programs, posters, reading lists, bookmarks, booklets, and forms for the Library, the Boston Library Consortium, the Metro Boston Library Network, the Office of Higher Education, the Eastern Region, and the Associates of the Boston Public Library. The procedures involved in the print operation, in addition to printing itself, are numerous and mandate special equipment: the creation of plates or duplicating impressions, copying, collating, stapling, folding/perforating, scoring, padding, shrink wrapping, inserting, addressing, and—finally—distribution. In FY91 the items produced in the Duplicating Section numbered 1,023 jobs which utilized 1,162,138 sheets of paper.

Buildings

This year the McKim building achieved full readiness for the actual beginning of restoration/renovation. By February the trustees had successfully attained all permits necessary to issue formal construction bids for Phase I. Plans were made for the removal of the extensive Research Library holdings to the Charlestown Service building. At least 100,000 items need to be transferred.

By the end of March, plans and specifications for the project were advertised with bids from sub-contractors (masonry, metal fabrications, waterproofing, glazing) due May 2 and general contractor bids due May 30. With the conclusion of FY91, the lowest bidder, Peabody Construction Company of

Braintree, having complied fully with specifications and legal obligations, was awarded the contract. Gerald E. Dopp was named clerk of the works.

The scope of activities in the Buildings Department remained demanding and extensive in FY91. Attention was directed to electrical/mechanical/plumbing systems in central and the branches, to security, communications, custodial and laborer services, repairs, painting, carpentry, and extermination. Carpentry projects ranged from building bookcases to repairing damages from storms or vandalism. The frequent installation or dismantling of central library exhibits often called for carpentry. Painting assignments included refurbishing branches and central, removal of graffiti, and refinishing furniture.

Particular attention went to Inspection and Information Services with the objective of training and educating staff in relations with the public and consistency in enforcing library policies related to security.

Custodial Services experienced great turnover in FY91, leaving staff coverage thin. The plan to create a travel crew of custodians, ready to serve as branch replacements or to respond immediately to units needing custodial attention failed to become a reality.

Cost containment was a major focus this year. The department worked with Boston Edison Energy Conservation in relamping Dudley Branch and the central cafeteria. Branch buildings were monitored to control costs of lighting and mechanical equipment.

Preparation moved ahead for the expansion of data processing by planning for laying out cables and terminals throughout the system. Air-conditioning, essential for central data processing equipment, was constantly monitored.

The Buildings Department worked in close cooperation with the Boston Athletic Association for the Boston Marathon that finishes in front of the Library on Boylston Street.

The supervisor of Library buildings summed up his department's mission: "Since the operation of the Buildings Department reflects the Library visually, we will continue to perform its duties with a goal of improving the quality of work with high standards."

Friends

Since last year, two more neighborhood Friends of the Library groups have been formed at the Codman Square and Uphams Corner Branch Libraries. There are now 20 such neighborhood groups, in addition to the City-Wide Friends and the Associates. The combined membership of these groups is now estimated at more than two thousand individuals.

In addition to continuing their financial support of library programs, Friends groups also contributed to other special projects. In Charlestown, for instance, the Friends underwrote the costs of restoring the branch library's painting by Samuel F. B. Morse. In the West End, the Friends received a second two-thousand-dollar grant from the Boston Foundation under the Greenspace Alliance Program to continue improvements to the library grounds. The Faneuil Branch Friends contributed 40 stackable chairs to augment available seating for branch programs.

Of particular note was an initiative of the City-Wide Friends to underwrite the costs for provision of admission passes to the New England Aquarium at all 25 branch libraries and the central library. The passes complement Museum of Science admission passes which were donated for the first time this year by the Museum under a grant it had received from the Lowell Institute. Both passes are in constant use and are proving to be an effective means of encouraging greater use of these Boston institutions by local neighborhood residents.

Staff

Many staff members were recognized this year for their achievements and special contributions. Euclid (Ed) Peltier, founder of the Library's Audiovisual Department, retired after more than 40 years of service. In their meeting of 27 February 1991, the Trustees voted to bestow on Ed Peltier the title of Curator of Films, *Emeritus*, citing his extensive contributions to the Library and its patrons, to libraries across the nation, and to the film industry. In an overflow Rabb Lecture Hall, Ed's friends and colleagues gave a special tribute. Michael Blowen, film critic for the *Boston Globe*, called Ed "one of Boston's most important protectors of film art."

Ruth Chamberlain Kowal was named this year to the post of Regional administrator of the Eastern Massachusetts Regional Library System. Kowal came to the Library from her position as Regional Administrator, Central Massachusetts Regional System in Worcester. She had previously served in executive library positions in southeastern Massachusetts and in New York State.

Concluding Thoughts

Once again as FY91 draws to a close the Library is faced with budget problems and the need to plan alternatives in terms of hours of service and staffing for FY92. Let me quote the ever quotable David McCord, who wrote at the time of the Library's centennial: "The problems of adapting this great building to the present-day pressures, with the periodic need for more space, is not easy of solution."

Almost forty years later, adapting the central library and branches to current problems is not easy, but we are moving in double-time to find solutions.

Arthur Curley
Director and Librarian

Library Resources

General Book Collections

Volumes	5,904,605
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Special Collections

Rare Books and Manuscripts	1,238,612
Prints	725,924
Patents	9,435,056
Maps	319,218
Government Documents	2,110,908
Musical Scores	96,910

Periodicals

Current Subscriptions	16,923
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Non-Print Materials

Audio-Recordings	329,618
Films & Video Cassettes	17,445
Microforms	4,416,851

TOTAL	<u>24,612,070</u>
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Library Use

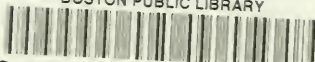
Visitors	2,085,716
Programs	5,024
Program Attendance	168,029
Items Borrowed	2,127,039
Volumes Consulted	976,033
Reference Inquiries	1,339,049
Photocopies	1,498,000

Library Expenditures

	FY89	FY91
A. Salaries and Wages		
City of Boston	\$14,087,657.	\$14,108,404.
Commonwealth of Massachusetts		
State Aid	191,537.	0
ERLS*	1,353,318.	1,205,655.
Library of Last Recourse	1,685,958.	1,896,831.
Federal/State/Private Grants	<u>89,913.</u>	<u>333,454.</u>
TOTAL (A)	\$17,408,373.	\$17,544,344.
B. Books and Other Library Materials		
City of Boston	\$2,372,978.	\$2,565,034.
Commonwealth of Massachusetts		
ERLS*	1,196,476.	928,446.
Library of Last Recourse	1,867,962.	2,233,730.
Other State Aid	330,456.	337,071.
Trust Fund Income	193,911.	245,792.
Federal Grants	<u>138,551.</u>	<u>68,310.</u>
TOTAL (B)	\$6,100,334.	\$6,378,383.
C. All Other Expenses		
City of Boston	\$2,871,479.	\$2,915,464.
Commonwealth of Massachusetts		
ERLS*	670,380.	875,736.
Library of Last Recourse	0	392,752.
Other State Aid	0	195,510.
Trust Fund Income	21,790.	128,322.
Federal/State/Private Grants	<u>81,802.</u>	<u>245,789.</u>
TOTAL (C)	\$3,645,451.	\$4,753,573.
GRAND TOTAL (A, B, & C)	\$27,154,159.	\$28,676,300.

* Eastern Massachusetts Regional Library System

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