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# THE PHOTOSTAT IN REFERENCE WORK

By CHARLES F. McCOMBS

READERS' DIVISION, THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

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1920

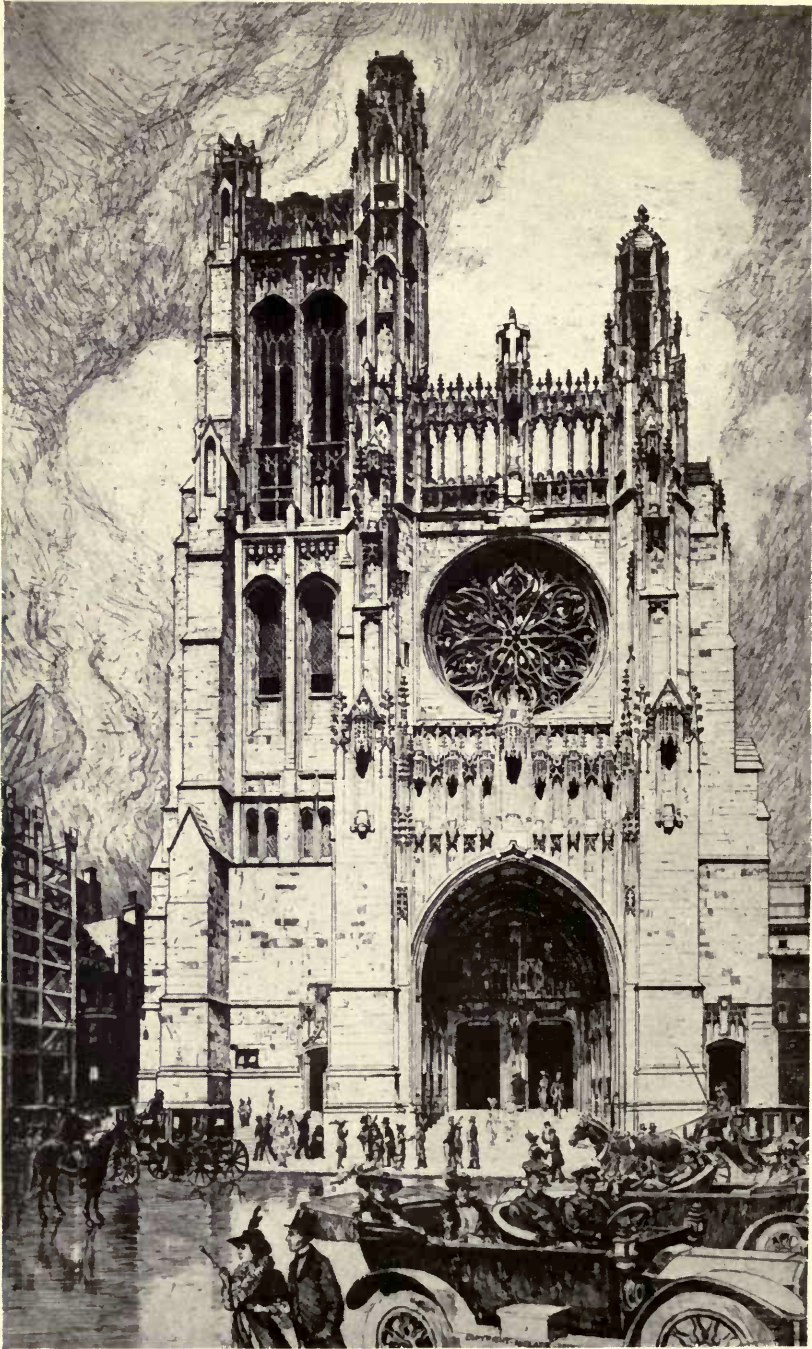


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REPRODUCED FROM PHOTOSTAT

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# THE PHOTOSTAT IN REFERENCE WORK

By CHARLES F. McCOMBS

READERS' DIVISION, THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

1920



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for of



REPRINTED, NOVEMBER 1920  
FROM THE  
BULLETIN OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
OF OCTOBER, 1920  
PRINTED AT THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
form p-148 [xi-15-20 3c]



THE  
VVHOLE  
BOOKE OF PSALMES

*Faithfully*  
TRANSLATED into ENGLISH  
*Metre.*

Whereunto is prefixed a discourse de-  
claring not only the lawfullnes, but also  
the necessity of the heavenly Ordinance  
of singing Scripture Psalmes in  
the Churches of  
God.

*Coll. III.*

*Let the word of God dwell plenteously in  
you, in all wisdom, teaching and exhort-  
ing one another in Psalmes, Himnes, and  
spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord with  
grace in your hearts.*

*Iames v.*

*If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if  
any be merry let him sing psalmes.*

*Imprinted*

1640

REPRODUCED FROM PHOTOSTAT

TITLE-PAGE OF RARE BOOK

(Bay Psalm Book)

439091







## THE PHOTOSTAT IN REFERENCE WORK

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THE photostat is a specially-constructed copying camera which makes the photographic reproduction directly on sensitized paper. A roll of paper is fastened in a magazine at the back of the camera box, and is unrolled as needed. The sheets, cut off in the proper length, are dropped into the developing box as fast as the exposures are made. Books, prints, or objects to be copied are placed under glass on an adjustable frame, which may be raised or lowered if enlargement or reduction of the original is desired. The print is a negative, corrected as to position, but with the black and white of the original reversed.

If a positive print — a facsimile with black letters on a white ground — is desired, the negative, when developed, is placed on the frame and photographed again. Each additional positive copy of a print is obtained by repeating this process of photographing the negative, and not, as in the case of a glass negative, printing from it. The prints may be developed in the developing box, or more conveniently in the dark room. When washed, the prints are dried on racks or between blotters.

Negative prints — white on black — are clear, easy to read and for ordinary printed matter, almost as satisfactory as the positives. A bromide or mat finished paper is ordinarily used, but if sharper detail is desired a gelatine or glossy paper is needed. The gelatine paper is slower, slightly more difficult to manipulate, and more expensive, but is always used if the prints are for reproduction.

For the convenience of readers, The New York Public Library installed a photostat in December, 1912. Reproductions are made only of books or other material in the Library's collections. No outside commercial work is done. In 1913, the first year of its operation, 511 orders were handled. This machine makes prints up to 11½ by 14 inches in size. The work developed so rapidly that in 1917 a second machine, making prints 14 by 18 inches — used for newspapers, maps, etc. — was purchased. The order book records 4,150 separate orders for 1919, and the number handled during the present year will probably reach 5,600. In other words, in one month the Library now handles as many orders as were placed during the twelve months of 1913.

The number of orders placed merely indicates the number of separate transactions recorded. A single order may be for only one page of a book, requiring but one print, or it may be for the entire book which might require several hundred prints. Usually one order sheet contains items from several books. Large orders requiring hundreds of prints are of frequent occurrence.



Why should a library maintain such a photographic service? After all it is merely an important auxiliary to our reference service. The increasing use of photostat reproductions is due to a growing realization of its unlimited possibilities in reference work, in making the resources of a great library more accessible in convenient and usable form, and at comparatively small cost.

In university or reference libraries photography has long been employed for copying manuscripts, early printed books, or other material of which facsimiles and not transcripts or tracings are required for study. It is also used for reproducing pictures or portraits for book or periodical illustration. Libraries, however, have seldom maintained photographic departments, but have entrusted the work to reliable commercial photographers. Photographs made from plate negatives are expensive, and the process, as compared with the photostat, slow. They are, of course, better reproductions — sharper in detail and finer in finish — than the photostat print, although a skilful operator, using a gelatine paper, can make prints with the photostat that compare favorably with good plate work. The Library is doing more and more of this kind of work for book and magazine illustration.

The chief advantages of the photostat, or of similar copying devices, are the simplicity of operation, the rapidity with which prints can be turned out, and the small cost in comparison with other photographic processes. The use of the photostat is by no means limited to reproducing the things previously mentioned. In fact, this material forms a relatively small, though important, part of the work now done by the Library.

The portable typewriting machine is a great aid to the writer whose daily work requires the use of a public library. Note-taking in longhand — even dictation to a stenographer — is slow and fatiguing work. If one is gathering material for an article, one is apt to make a rough digest or summary of the essential sources consulted, or painfully to copy important paragraphs in full. Either method is tedious, and when some time later — often far away from books and libraries — notes are finally arranged, and the actual writing begun, there is constant worry and uncertainty as to the accuracy and completeness of the notes. Errors of fact occur, due to bad handwriting, and errors in reasoning due to serious omissions. The use of the typewriter by many professional writers has lessened the drudgery to some degree and has saved much time.

Perhaps the photostat will change all that when the advantages of an absolutely accurate copy of a printed page are fully realized. A modern library finds it necessary to provide places — apart from readers who desire quiet — where typewriting machines may be used, and it is glad to grant such requests as far as space permits. Is it any less important that a great reference library should provide at cost a photographic copying service?

Such a service could be maintained by the joint effort of libraries of various types — university and special libraries, museums, or other educational institutions in a place where the returns would not justify any one of them in installing such a service, or where the initial cost of equipment and the operating expenses could not be borne.



It is a safe prediction that within the next few years the photostat will change many of the present methods of reference work in research libraries. Few people have any idea of the vital if inconspicuous part which the printed book plays in furthering progress in science, in government, and in all departments of human activity. No real advance would be possible in any field, without an appalling waste of time and energy, if we did not know what had been accomplished in the past, or is now being done in other parts of the world, and that knowledge can only be gained from printed books and other records.

There are three services which a library can perform which make its books accessible to scholars everywhere, and which extend its usefulness far beyond its own community. First, the preparation of printed catalogues of notable special collections, or bibliographies on important subjects such as are published in this Bulletin. Second, the further development of inter-library loans of books needed for research, and finally, provision for a rapid and inexpensive photographic copying service.

When a library is asked for a book which it does not possess, one which is badly needed for important study, a resourceful reference librarian will endeavor, by means of printed catalogues or special bibliographies, to find a copy in some other library. He will try to borrow it, or if that cannot be done, to obtain photostat reproductions of the pages needed.

An examination of our photostat order blanks for any month is illuminating and instructive. Each affords concrete evidence of the practical use made of a reference library. In the main, requests fall into the following groups:

(1) Printed matter — whether books, periodicals or newspapers — of which merely a copy is wanted. A transcript in longhand, or a typewritten copy would serve just as well, but the photostat is quicker, and usually cheaper in the long run. A photographic copy is also free from errors and omissions to which the most careful copyist or typist is at times liable, and the record is more permanent.

Orders for prints come from engineers, chemists, makers of everything from explosive powder to paint. The special libraries and laboratories of industrial and manufacturing corporations call upon us for articles in scientific and technical journals needed to carry on their own investigations. Banks and social workers want statistical tables and government reports. Musicians, composers, even orchestra conductors, are using photostat copies of music which is out of print, or which can not be easily obtained outside of library collections. For no other two classes of printed matter is the use of the photostat more important than for tables of statistics, and music. A wrong figure or a false note may produce disastrous consequences. Family trees and coats of arms are copied for genealogists, professional and amateur.

American, British and foreign patents are photographed for patent lawyers, or for patent departments of large industrial corporations. Probably more than half the prints we make are copies of the specifications and drawings of patents.



The names of writers, critics, editors, journalists — especially the special feature writer, — scholars, university professors, graduate students, government officials and diplomats, may be found in our index to orders received.

(2) In the second group are included the following classes of material: maps, diagrams, architectural plans, and all forms of graphic or pictorial art, whether original prints or illustrations found in books. Were it not for the inexpensive photostat such material would be photographed by the slower plate process if desired for book, magazine or newspaper illustration. If copies are wanted for study only, or for use in designing, tracings (if permitted) or sketches might be used.

Artists, architects, landscape gardeners, designers of furniture, textiles, rugs, jewelry, actors, stage managers, and moving picture managers (for details as to costumes, stage settings, makeup of historical characters), and advertising men are among the many classes of people who wish reproductions of all sorts of pictures. Newspapers and magazines make frequent requests for portraits of persons who have suddenly achieved celebrity, or for views — scenes or buildings — from some part of the world brought to public attention by current events.

(3) The third and last group of this rough classification comprises manuscripts, incunabula, first editions, rarities of all sorts, of which photographic copies are almost a necessity for satisfactory study or collation, if access cannot be had to the originals. Furthermore, the originals, which are frequently of great value, and practically irreplaceable (manuscripts, of course, are unique), are saved the wear and tear to which even the most careful handling subjects them, if they are frequently consulted. The average person is not apt to think that books of this class are of much use except in museums. They have a certain interest on account of their beauty or value or rarity, and he enjoys seeing them on exhibition, but he does not know that they are necessary for studies in history, or literature, or the development of the art of printing.

A large reference library, as was shown in "A Librarian's Mail," which appeared in the July issue of the Bulletin, receives many letters which can not be satisfactorily answered, because of the time which the search, collection of material and copying would require of the reference staff, already unable to meet the more legitimate demands of readers in this Library. The photostat is frequently mentioned, and in many cases where the books suggested can not be obtained in libraries nearer the writer's home, a request is received for a photostat copy of the picture or page or chapter. The use of the photostat in handling a reference library's correspondence has not begun to be developed.

A properly organized photostat service involves far more than a machine, a dark room, and an operator. The actual process of photographing and developing is after all a small part of the job. The greater part of the orders received are placed directly by readers at the Library. An increasing number are received by letter, or formal written order, and many — chiefly for patents



# CHARLESTON MERCURY

EXTRA:

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*Passed unanimously at 1.15 o'clock, P. M. December  
20th, 1860.*

## AN ORDINANCE

*To dissolve the Union between the State of South Carolina and  
other States united with her under the compact entitled "The  
Constitution of the United States of America."*

*We, the People of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and  
it is hereby declared and ordained,*

That the Ordinance adopted by us in Convention, on the twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, whereby the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified, and also, all Acts and parts of Acts of the General Assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed; and that the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of "The United States of America," is hereby dissolved.

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THE

# UNION

IS

# DISSOLVED!

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COPY OF BROADSIDE



5.--Exports to the United Kingdom, to the United States and to Other Countries of Merchandise the produce of Canada, 1868-1920.

Fiscal Year.	United Kingdom.	United States.	Other Countries.	Totals.
	\$	\$	\$	\$
1868.....	17,905,808	22,387,846	5,249,523	45,543,177
1869.....	20,486,389	23,640,188	5,196,727	49,323,304
1870.....	22,512,991	27,398,930	6,169,271	56,081,192
1871.....	21,733,556	26,715,690	6,732,110	55,181,356
1872.....	25,223,785	29,984,440	7,735,802	62,944,027
1873.....	31,402,234	33,421,725	8,421,647	73,245,606
1874.....	35,769,190	30,380,556	7,777,002	73,926,748
1875.....	34,199,134	25,683,818	7,607,941	67,490,893
1876.....	34,379,005	27,451,150	8,031,694	69,861,849
1877.....	35,491,671	22,160,666	8,212,543	65,864,880
1878.....	35,861,110	22,131,343	7,747,681	65,740,134
1879.....	29,393,424	23,149,909	7,546,245	60,089,578
1880.....	35,208,031	26,762,705	8,125,455	70,096,191
1881.....	42,637,219	31,015,109	7,269,051	80,921,379
1882.....	39,816,813	41,687,638	8,538,260	90,042,711
1883.....	39,538,067	36,096,501	8,651,139	84,285,707
1884.....	37,410,870	31,631,622	8,089,587	77,132,079
1885.....	36,479,051	32,618,593	7,085,874	76,183,518
1886.....	36,694,263	31,503,292	6,777,951	74,975,506
1887.....	38,714,331	32,273,033	6,976,656	77,964,020
1888.....	33,648,284	37,323,161	7,326,305	78,297,750
1889.....	33,504,281	36,449,288	7,248,235	77,201,804
1890.....	41,499,149	33,291,207	7,545,158	82,335,514
1891.....	43,243,784	34,829,436	7,684,524	85,757,744
1892.....	54,949,055	31,317,857	9,417,341	95,684,253
1893.....	58,409,606	33,813,802	9,783,082	102,006,490
1894.....	60,878,056	29,297,598	10,411,199	100,586,853
1895.....	57,903,564	32,303,773	9,321,014	99,528,351
1896.....	62,717,941	34,460,428	9,200,383	106,378,752
1897.....	69,533,852	39,717,057	10,434,501	119,685,410
1898.....	93,065,019	34,361,795	12,494,118	139,920,932
1899.....	85,113,681	34,766,955	12,920,626	132,801,262
1900.....	96,562,875	52,534,977	14,412,938	163,510,790
1901.....	92,857,525	67,983,673	16,590,188	177,431,386
1902.....	109,347,345	66,567,784	20,104,634	196,019,763
1903.....	125,199,980	67,766,367	21,435,327	214,401,674
1904.....	110,120,892	66,856,885	21,436,662	198,414,439
1905.....	97,114,867	70,426,765	23,313,314	190,854,946
1906.....	127,456,465	83,546,306	24,481,185	235,483,956
1907 (9 months).....	98,691,186	62,257,299	19,596,821	180,545,306
1908.....	126,194,124	90,814,371	29,951,973	246,960,968
1909.....	126,384,724	85,334,806	30,884,054	242,603,584
1910.....	139,482,945	104,199,675	35,564,931	279,247,551
1911.....	132,156,924	104,115,823	38,043,806	274,316,553
1912.....	147,240,413	102,041,222	40,942,222	290,223,857
1913.....	170,161,903	139,725,953	45,866,744	355,754,600
1914.....	215,253,969	163,372,825	52,961,645	431,588,439
1915.....	186,668,554	173,320,216	49,430,066	409,418,836
1916.....	451,852,399	201,106,488	88,651,751	741,610,638
1917.....	742,147,537	280,616,330	128,611,901	1,151,375,768
1918.....	845,480,069	417,233,287	277,314,432	1,540,027,788
1919.....	540,750,977	454,873,170	220,819,659	1,216,443,806
1920.....	489,151,806	464,029,014	286,311,278	1,239,492,098

NOTE.—For the years 1868 to 1900, the amounts estimated "short" were not included.

REPRODUCED FROM PHOTOSTAT

COPY OF STATISTICAL TABLE



— are telephoned. The service is at present organized as a section of the Readers' Division, its headquarters at the delivery desk in the Main Reading Room, with a reference assistant in immediate charge. There is also at the delivery desk a clerical assistant, and a page is regularly assigned for messenger duty. In the photographing room the force consists of a skilled photographer, an assistant operator and a page.

All correspondence, save routine notices, is handled through the Director's office. The service must be supervised by an assistant with reference experience, familiar with library methods, having some knowledge of bibliography and reference books. Orders are frequently vague and inexact in describing the material to be photographed, and the same problems that occur in reference work constantly arise—the books must be collected from all over the Library, the pages or plates to be photographed carefully marked, and explicit directions given on the order sheet. The prints when made and assembled in the photographing room, must then be checked with the order, omissions noted and filled in, and the completed work filed for delivery or prepared for mailing. In 1913 the orders were handled through the Director's office and the work done by one of the stack assistants who spent a few hours each week in the photographing room.

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\* Recommended.











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2 Aug '54 MCX

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*L.H.  
4/62*











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