

Lawrence Free Public Library

Lawrence, Kansas

Report To The Board Of Directors For 1964

To the Board of Directors:

Use of the public library continued to show an increase for 1964. It is difficult to record the number of people who used library materials solely within our walls, thus making no impression on our daily records. Nevertheless, many did just that. A more concrete, but nonetheless imperfect, measure of usage involves circulation of books and number of registered borrowers. Circulation measures books charged out. How many of these are actually read, we cannot know. Statistics of registered borrowers tell how many persons indicate their desire to use the library. How regularly they do so is another matter.

However imperfect these measurements may be, circulation and registration figures function to provide a barometer of activity of library use. As the accompanying charts indicate, both circulation and registration increased in 1964. 304,958 books circulated as compared to 281,156 in 1963. An increase of 23,802 or 8.5% over the previous year. Our registrations increased at a lesser pace than in 1963, but nevertheless showed a rise of 741 registered borrowers to bring the total to 14,541.

These figures indicate that the library does play a part in the life of the community. This is encouraging. But that this represents registration of only 36% of the estimated 40,000 people in Lawrence shows there is much to be done to make the library more important in the eyes of the majority of Lawrence residents. New ways of reaching the other 54% must be tried. Without question, the inadequacy of the present library building plays a part in this deficiency. The recently completed comprehensive city plan state the definite need for new facilities. This problem of inadequate space for service will become more acute each year. It should be a major consideration of the city, the Library Board and the Librarian. Only with strong primary support from the Library Board will this project receive community backing. Until such support is evident, the needs of the library will be noted, remarked upon, and shelved 'for future consideration'.

An impetus for support may come in the form of the 1964 Library Services Act, which will provide federal matching funds for library building in Kansas in the amount of approximately \$200,000 a year. Another area to consider in attempting to reach non-library users may be related to the current anti-poverty bill. Effects of this program on public libraries have yet to be seen, but current and pending federal legislation may have a long-range effect on public libraries in the U.S.

Other areas of library development within the state include the recently completed survey of public libraries in Kansas. This survey will help to illustrate the needs of libraries in Kansas and form an authoritative guide for new library legislation. In conjunction with the survey, a library systems law is now being proposed. Similar to legislation in effect in several other states, this bill would provide the legal base for wider units of library cooperation and the means to finance them. A broader power of contractual arrangement between libraries would be permitted than is now the case.

Turning to the actual operations of the Lawrence Public Library in 1964, two areas should be specifically mentioned: operations and changes in the library and plans for changes to be made in 1965.

In the area of library operations, the major personnel change during the year was the resignation of Emily Hartman, head of Adult Services and the hiring, in September of Mrs. Howard Taylor as acting head of that department.

The major change within the library took place on the balcony where the existing stacks were re-arranged to permit introduction of three new services: (1) a self-operated photocopy machine (2) a phonograph with headphones for private listening. (3) a microfilm reader for use with the Lawrence Journal-World, which is available on microfilm starting in 1963. All of these services have been steadily used since their introduction in the late summer of 1964.

A book sale was held in the fall and the proceeds, amounting to more than \$180.00 went for the purchase of new adult books. Perhaps the major expansion in the Adult Department concerned the building up of the pamphlet files. Several thousand pamphlets, from government and other sources, were bought and indexed. They are now located in four vertical files consisting of 5 drawers each. Designed for public and reference use, a pamphlet file is a major asset to a public library. It supplements the regular collection and pinpoints information on various topics, some of which are difficult to find in book form. The file will continue to expand in the coming months and we expect its use to grow in the years ahead.

Activity in the Children's Department continues to increase. This year the Summer Reading Program enrolled 2,115 children. Of these, 1,692 completed the reading requirements and received certificate awards in their school during Book Week in November. One problem occurred in the summer with the breakdown of the bookmobile. Due to its age and condition, the bookmobile was sold to a local auto wrecking company. Considerations are now under way for purchase of a smaller vehicle which would be suitable for the playground stops in the summer as well as other extensions of service. As a result of increased use of the Children's Department in recent years it was decided to extend evening hours to include Tuesday nights as well as Thursday.

Two other programs remained in the planning stage during 1964 and are expected to be put into operation in 1965.

The first involves installation of a new circulation system in the Adult Department. The circulation of books has risen to the point there where more efficient loan procedures can be effected. After much study, it was decided to change over to what is referred to as a self-charge transaction system. This is expected to take effect by April of 1965. This is considered to be one of the least expensive and most efficient systems a library of our size can install. When the new system is in effect, it will free a staff member for at least 10 hours a week for work directly with the patrons.

As a result of this change and other lessening of the time involved on routine duties, plans are being made to begin a part-time reference and readers advisor service in early summer. It is expected that we will shift the present fiction stacks to the East reading room and make the present stack area a reference room. The idea behind this move is to have seating and reference material close to the

circulation desk area for better supervision and use of reference materials. In addition, we plan to set up a reference desk in the area, to be manned, on a part-time basis, by trained staff members. By separating the circulation routines and the reference work, we hope to increase the quality of service. The new circulation system mentioned should cut down on enough routine duties to warrant experimenting in this direction.

In retrospect, the library has had a good year. More people have used our facilities and these facilities have been used more frequently than ever before. Most of the reasons for this increase can be traced to the library staff. Several people should be mentioned specifically. Mrs. Osma, Assistant Librarian, both for her work in handling the processing of the thousands of items received each year as well as her fine sense of book selection which is invaluable in attracting patrons to the library.

Miss Koehler, Children's Librarian, has consistently provided high quality of reading in her department. She and her staff have provided reading guidance to thousands of children in the past year alone.

Mrs. Taylor, Head of Adult Services, has been with the library since fall of 1964. In this time she has done an excellent job of building up the pamphlet files for current and future reference work.

In addition to these should be mentioned Mrs. Weeks, our bookkeeper, who has handled the finances as well as numerous other tasks asked of her. James Anthony, our custodian, has worked conscientiously to keep the building in a state of repair. To these and other staff members, including our high school pages, goes appreciation for making the library a place of importance in the community.

Wayne Mayo
Librarian