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## Growth of the Law Library Book Collection

Beverly Gordon Womack

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# LOUISIANA LAW REVIEW

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## EDITORIAL

### GROWTH OF THE LAW LIBRARY BOOK COLLECTION

In less than twenty years, the Louisiana State University Law Library book collection has grown from one that was so small and inadequate it prevented the Law School becoming a member of the American Association of Law Schools to a collection that is now a source of real pride to the Law School. The Law Library now ranks high among the leading law school libraries in the South.

In this past fiscal year, due to the generosity of the University Board of Supervisors in providing a special appropriation for the purpose, an unusual number of valuable additions were made to the book collection; and at this time, the thoughts of our beloved

Professor Ira S. Flory must have gone back to that time when the Library did not meet the requirements of the Association of American Law Schools.

In 1912, when Mr. Flory first became a member of the law faculty, the Library book collection numbered less than three thousand volumes. The Association required an minimum of five thousand bound volumes of live law books. The University at that time was unable to provide the funds needed, and there was much talk among law students as to how the necessary books could be secured. There were various suggestions. Why not secure donations of the books of deceased lawyers? Perhaps the Association would allow the National Reporter System to be counted as equivalent to the number of volumes of state reports covered therein. Of course, no such suggestions were workable. Finally, by the session of 1923-24, the Library had increased to about three thousand and five hundred volumes; and there had been organized a new law club, with some very enthusiastic seniors who one day came to Mr. Flory with the suggestion that the law alumni be asked to contribute money for law books so that the desired goal of five thousand books could be reached. The plan seemed practical. Dean Tullis and President Boyd agreed to it. The work of contacting these alumni fell to Mr. Flory. He gave up his trip to Virginia for the 1924 summer vacation, and earnestly set about the task of contacting members of the L. S. U. Law School alumni. Mere correspondence did not prove effective, and so Mr. Flory took his car and traveled around the state calling on the various law alumni personally to explain the need for a greater law library. By the end of the summer, a little over \$10,000 had been promised, and most of the money had been received. Thus through the efforts of Professor Flory and the generosity of the Law School Alumni, the foundations of the Library were laid. The minimum library requirements of the American Association of Law Schools at that time were fulfilled.

The Library has continued to grow, slowly at first, and after 1936, very rapidly. Alice Daspit (now Mrs. Leonard Greenburg), who was Law Librarian from 1938 to 1942, is responsible for making the careful plans which thereafter have served as a guide for building the collection. There were many problems. Besides those common to all expanding university law libraries, L.S.U. had an additional one arising from the fact that Louisiana is a civil law state. Students must be provided with a civil law collection and also with the materials necessary for the study of

the common law system of the federal courts and of other states. The L.S.U. Law Library is obliged to develop and maintain a double collection.

When the war came, it seemed for a while that expansion would be discontinued for the duration. Out-of-print materials needed to fill gaps in the collection became available on the market but the wartime budget was only large enough for purchasing current materials and for maintaining and conserving the present collection. It did not permit an expansion of the library holdings by the purchase of those basic older materials which were necessary for a complete research library.

In February of 1944, the Law Library received a large special appropriation which enabled it to push forward its program of expansion. The Library was now able to take advantage of certain offers of needed materials, which would become more scarce and more expensive as the years went by.

Professor Flory, during all its years of growth and expansion, had continued his lively interest in the welfare of the Law Library. Once again, in February of 1944, he was called upon to take an active part in the Library's program—not to fight for funds this time but to aid in seeing that the generous appropriation made by the University was wisely and carefully used for making the best possible purchases. He was asked by the Dean to act as Library Advisor.

It was to him that the Law Librarian took the many problems which came up in the purchasing program of the next few months. It was he who spent hours patiently helping the Law Librarian to compile the lists of materials which were to be purchased. He has watched the book collection grow over a period of years, and he knows it well. With his many years service to the Law School and his many years association with members of the Louisiana bar, he was and is in a position to offer valuable advice for the building of a law library which is fast approaching a complete legal research center, containing the materials required to meet the diversified needs of not only the Law School faculty and students but also of various state departments, the Louisiana bar, the Louisiana State Law Institute, and other departments of the University.

In the collection will be found the latest code or compilation of laws for every state, complete session laws from 1850 to date for nearly all states and early runs of laws for the majority of the states. Among items bought with the recent special appro-

priation were session laws for one thousand and fourteen sessions. Sets of supreme court reports and state appeal reports have been completed except for a few rare volumes. There are now two sets of the American Digest System in the Library, as well as various other digests. There are complete sets of every Shepard's Citor. Within recent years, much emphasis has been placed on acquiring attorney generals' reports, so that only the rarer ones are now lacking. The textbook and treatise collection, augmented last year by the addition of four hundred and fifty-three volumes, now contains about five thousand volumes. Subscriptions are being carried for all periodicals indexed in the *Index to Legal Periodicals*, and the back sets have been secured for the majority of these sets. The collection of English and Canadian materials has now reached sizable proportions. The collection of French materials is one that always receives favorable comment from visiting scholars; unfortunately, because of war conditions, only a few items could be added this past year. Much progress was made in building working collections for the various Latin American countries, whose law, like that of Louisiana, is derived from the French and Spanish. The entire book collection, made up of the above and other types of materials, has now reached a total of approximately 60,000 volumes.

It is sincerely hoped that members of the Louisiana Bar, various State Departments and any other Louisianians who may have occasion to do research in the source materials of this state and of other jurisdictions, will continue and will increase their use of the Law School's fine library facilities. The Law Library is being built up as a research unit and welcomes the opportunity to serve.

BEVERLY GORDON WOMACK,  
*Law Librarian, 1943-1945*