

LIBRARY WORK WITH THE BLINDS IN THE UNITED STATES,

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In the United States the circulation of embossed literature for the blind, though yet in its infancy, shows a steady and gratifying development. The general awakening of interest throughout the country regarding the means of improving the condition of the blind has created a desire on the part of a number of public libraries to supply their sightless citizens with embossed reading. The public libraries of many of the larger cities have already established departments for the blind, and a number of others are making inquiries how best to begin this new work. The problem has been met by a number of public libraries in as many different ways. In some of the states, books have been purchased for the State Library or for the Travelling Library Commission from state appropriations and may be loaned to residents of the state only; in other states, the largest public library in the state has undertaken to circulate the books.

In a number of cities where the public library supplies embossed reading matter to residents of the city, the privilege has been extended to readers of the same state outside the city limits. In other cases owing to the terms on which funds are provided by taxation for the support of the public library, it has not been legally possible to extend the privilege beyond the city limits.

Such public libraries supported by city tax are urged to coöperate with Travelling Library Commissions in circulating throughout the state embossed books owned by the city library at a given rate per volume circulated. This arrangement is already successfully carried out between the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore and the Maryland State Library Commission, the volumes belonging to the Enoch Pratt Library being circulated to readers throughout Maryland at the expense of the Travelling Library Commission, which pays the Enoch Pratt Library a stated price for each embossed volume sent outside Baltimore.

The following is a list of the libraries in the United States now circulating embossed books :

| <i>Name of State and of Library</i> | <i>Name of City and of the Librarian.</i> |
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| <i>California</i> State Library | <i>Sacramento</i> Hon. James L. Gilis |
| <i>California</i> Reading Room for the Blind, 3535, 16th Street | <i>San Francisco</i> Harriet L. Young |
| <i>Colorado</i> Public Library | <i>Denver</i> Charles R. Dudley |
| <i>Colorado</i> State Library | <i>Denver</i> Katherine L. Craig |
| <i>Connecticut</i> Public Library | <i>Hartford</i> Caroline M. Hewins |
| <i>Connecticut</i> Free Public Library | <i>New Haven</i> Willis K. Stetson |
| <i>Delaware</i> The Wilmington Institute Free Library | <i>Wilmington</i> Arthur L. Bailey |
| <i>District of Columbia</i> Library of Congress. Reading Room for the Blind | <i>Washington</i> Hon. Herbert Putnam, L.L.D. |

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| <i>Georgia</i> Carnegie Library | <i>Atlanta</i> Julia T. Rankin |
| <i>Illinois</i> Public Library | <i>Chicago</i> Henry E. Legler |
| <i>Indiana</i> State Library, Room 47, State House | <i>Indianapolis</i> Demarchus Brown |
| <i>Iowa</i> Iowa Library Commission; State Historical Building | <i>Des Moines</i> Margaret Wright Brown |
| <i>Kansas</i> Free Public Library | <i>Leavenworth</i> Asa Don Dickinson |
| <i>Maryland</i> Enoch Pratt Free Library | <i>Baltimore</i> Dr Bernard C. Steiner |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> Public Library | <i>Boston</i> Horace G. Wadlin |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> Public Library | <i>Brookline</i> Louisa M. Hooper |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> Public Library | <i>Fitchburg</i> George D. Nutting |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> Public Library | <i>Lynn</i> Harriet L. Matthews |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> Public Library | <i>New Bedford</i> George H. Tripp |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> The Berkshire Athenaeum | <i>Pittsfield</i> H. H. Ballard |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> Public Library | <i>Somerville</i> Sam Walter Foss |
| <i>Massachusetts</i> Free Public Library | <i>Worcester</i> Robert K. Shaw |
| <i>Michigan</i> Public Library | <i>Detroit</i> Henry M. Utley |

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| <i>Michigan</i> Public Library | <i>Grand Rapids</i> Samuel H. Ranck |
| <i>Michigan</i> Free Lending Library for the Blind | <i>Saginaw W. S.</i> Ambrose M. Shotwell |
| <i>Minnesota</i> Public Library | <i>Minneapolis</i> Gratia Countryman |
| <i>Missouri</i> Free Public Library | <i>St Joseph</i> Purd B. Wright |
| <i>New Jersey</i> Free Public Library | <i>Jersey City</i> Esther E. Burdick |
| <i>New Jersey</i> Public Library | <i>Newark</i> John C. Dana |
| <i>New York</i> New York State Library | <i>Albany</i> James I. Wyer |
| <i>New York</i> Brooklyn Public Library, Pacific Branch, 4th Ave- nue and Pacific Street | <i>Brooklyn</i> Frank P. Hill |
| <i>New York</i> Public Library | <i>Buffalo</i> Walter L. Brown |
| <i>New York</i> Public Library Department for the Blind, 444, Amsterdam Avenue | <i>New York City</i> Dr John S. Billings |
| <i>New York</i> Public Library | <i>Niagara Falls</i> Jennie A. Witmer |
| <i>New York</i> Roswell P. Flower Library | <i>Watertown</i> Rev. Dr Hoyt |
| <i>Ohio</i> Public Library | <i>Cincinnati</i> N. D. C. Hodges |
| <i>Ohio</i> Public Library | <i>Cleveland</i> William H. Brett |

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| <i>Ohio</i> Public Library, Room for the Blind | <i>Dayton</i> Matilda M. Light |
| <i>Oregon</i> Public Library | <i>Portland</i> Mary F. Isom |
| <i>Pennsylvania</i> Public Library | <i>Erie</i> M ^{rs} Jean Hard |
| <i>Pennsylvania</i> Free Library of Philadelphia, | <i>Philadelphia</i> John Thomson |
| <i>Pennsylvania</i> Carnegie Library | <i>Pittsburgh</i> Harrison W. Craver |
| <i>Rhode Island</i> Public Library | <i>Providence</i> William E. Foster |
| <i>Tennessee</i> Cossitt Library | <i>Memphis</i> Charles D. Johnston |
| <i>Texas</i> University Library | <i>Austin</i> Nathaniel Goodrich |
| <i>Utah</i> Public Library | <i>Salt Lake City</i> Miss Joanna Sprague |
| <i>Virginia</i> State Library | <i>Richmond</i> H. R. McIlwaine |
| <i>Washington</i> Public Library | <i>Seattle</i> Judson T. Jennings |
| <i>Wisconsin</i> Public Library | <i>Milwaukee</i> Dr George W. Peckham |

Other libraries coöperate with local societies organized in behalf of the blind. The Public Library of Cincinnati, Ohio, the New York Public Library and the Free Library of Philadelphia, all began their work for the blind in coöperation with such an organization.

The need for additional distributing centres for embossed books in the United States is very great. The blind in the

United States are scattered over an area twenty-five times as great as Great Britain and Ireland. The immense distances make it desirable that there should be at least one centre in each state, for the undesirability of sending books all over the country from *one* centre is very apparent when one considers that volumes are subjected to severe wear and tear in the mails and are out of service during the time consumed in long-distance travelling.

Not all the circulation of embossed literature has been due to the public libraries, however. A number of the progressive schools have been sending books to former pupils and others since the order of the Postmaster General became a law. Among these should be included the state schools for the blind of Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio as well as the Pennsylvania Institution at Overbrook and the Perkins Institution.

Public libraries must recognize the fact that a large number of those who should borrow books have never been trained in special schools for the blind. According to the last United States Census, there were at that time 4,363 pupils of school age then receiving training in special schools for the blind, but the total blind population in the United States by the same census numbered 69,258 others in addition to those at school. What of these 69,258?

A certain number have been former pupils but there are many thousands untrained in the use of tangible print. For these some other form of instruction must be considered and in several states this has been successfully accomplished by « home teaching ».

By « home teaching » is meant the individual instruction of the pupil in his own home by a special teacher qualified to instruct him regarding matters pertaining to the blind. The best home teaching and that which secures the best results to the blind individual includes not only instruction in the use of embossed type but also in various forms of handicraft.

The general awakening of interest in behalf of the blind throughout the country has led to the creation of a number

of State Commissions for the Blind as well as local associations which are interested in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the blind. The annual reports of these commissions and associations contain much information valuable to librarians who undertake to circulate embossed literature. Descriptive accounts of the commissions may be found in « Outlook for the Blind, » which also contains, from time to time, lists of the new publications in the several embossed types.

The « Outlook for the Blind » is especially recommended to all who are interested in the blind. It is published by the Massachusetts Association for Promoting the interest of the Blind, at 277 Harvard Street, Cambridge, Mass., and is « a quarterly record of the progress and welfare of the blind. ».

The Perkins Institution has published an especially valuable bibliography entitled : « Special Reference Library of Books Relating to the Blind ; Part I : Books in English, compiled under the direction of the late Michael Anagnos » The list is brought down to November 1, 1907 in a pamphlet of addenda.

The Committee on Work with the Blind of the American Library Association has placed itself on record as being neutral in the discussions prevailing concerning the two point systems, American Braille and New York Point.

It is desired that future publications in all types may be bound in less cumbersome form and size. Hitherto the size has been arranged to suit the purposes of schools. The circulating library is most concerned with reading done in the home and the weight and size of the volumes have considerable bearing upon the life of the book in its transmission through the mails, as well as the convenience to the Post Office Department. A less bulky volume would render the book no less suitable for the school and would be of greater convenience to the reader and library. The present large volumes weighing from six to nine and one-half pounds would better be made into two lighter volumes.

The two most important events of recent years in behalf of the blind have been the passage of the free postal law in 1904,

and the publication of the Matilda Ziegler Magazine for the Blind, in 1907.

Reader who were formerly unable to borrow books on account of the cost of postage or expressage now have the privilege of frequent exchanges in accordance with the recent act of Congress allowing free transportation of embossed books between readers and institutions for the blind or public Libraries. Gummed « return mailing labels » are supplied free by most public libraries, and are placed under the cover of each volume circulated.

A copy of the order of the Postmaster General follows :

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,

Washington, D. C., June 2, 1904.

Order No. 541.

Chapter 2, Title III, of the Postal Laws and Regulations is hereby amended by the addition of the following subdivision :

¶. — READING MATTER FOR THE BLIND.

Sec. 518 1/2. Books, pamphlets, and other reading matter in raised characters for the use of the blind, whether prepared by hand or printed, in single volumes, not exceeding ten pounds in weight, or in packages not exceeding four pounds in weight, and containing no advertising or other matter whatever, unsealed and when sent by public institutions for the blind, or by any public libraries, as a loan to blind readers, or when returned by the latter to such institutions or public libraries, shall be transmitted in the United States mails free of postage, and under such regulations as the Postmaster General may prescribe. (Act of April 27, 1904.)

2. Reading matter in raised characters for the use of the blind, to be entitled to transmission in the mails free of postage, must not contain any advertising or other matter whatever, and must in every case be sent by or returned to a public library or public institution for the blind.

3. When mailed by a public library or public institution for the blind, the matter must be sent as a loan to a blind reader. When mailed for return to a public library or public institution for the blind, the sender must be a blind reader.

4. The matter must be wrapped so that it may be easily examined.

5. No package is to weigh more than four pounds, except in case of a single volume, and it must not exceed ten pounds in weight.

6. On the upper left hand corner of the envelope or wrapper containing the matter the name and address of the sender must appear, and on the upper right hand corner the word « Free » over the words « Reading Matter for the Blind ».

Note. — Letters written in point print or raised characters used by the blind are not included in the reading matter entitled, under the

provisions of this section, to free transmission in the mails. (See Section 475).

H. C. PAYNE,
Postmaster General.

The *Matilda Ziegler Magazine* for the Blind is a gift to the blind by Mrs. William Ziegler of New York City. It is published monthly in two editions, one in American Braille, the other in New York point and was first issued in March 1907. Ten cents per year is the nominal subscription price. The magazine is now printed and bound in its own office at 306 West 53d Street, New York City.

There are now published in the United States the following periodicals in embossed type :

Catholic Transcript (monthly) published by the Xavier Free Publication Society for the Blind, 801 West 181st Street, New York City. Subscription \$ 1.00 per year. (in New York point).

Christian Record (monthly). Christian Record Publishing Company, College View, Nebraska. Two editions (American Braille with contractions and New York point). \$ 2.00 per year.

Milwaukee Weekly Review, now called *The Weekly Review for the Blind*; Joseph Gockel, publisher, 834, 36th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, \$ 2.50. (New York point).

Sunday School Weekly; published by the Society for Providing Evangelical Religious Literature for the Blind, 45, Broadway, New York City. \$ 1.50 per year. New York point.

Matilda Ziegler Magazine, (monthly), published by the Matilda Ziegler Magazine Publishing Company, 306 West 53d Street. New York City. \$ 0.10 per year. Two editions; American Braille with contractions and New York point.

The Braille Transcript, a bi-monthly magazine devoted to music; edited by Arthur Jewell, price \$ 0.50 per year; published by the Illinois School for the Blind, Jacksonville, Illinois.