Yale University Library 1998–1999

Report by Scott Bennett, University Librarian

The mission of the Yale University Library is to support teaching, learning, and research by providing access to recorded knowledge. Library staff carry out this mission in thousands of individual activities each year, selecting and cataloging material for the collections; building a sophisticated online information system; helping readers use the collections thoughtfully; and preserving the 300-year accumulation of research materials at Yale.

This brief annual report cannot hope to do justice to the daily activities of the library, ranging from the Beinecke’s acquisition of rare books to interns from Eastern Europe visiting the Slavic Collection; from the Archives 300 project to services for clinicians in the Yale-New Haven Hospital; from the cataloging of Vietnamese material to the provision of computer-based geographic information services; from instructional services in introductory English courses to building one of the university’s largest and most-used Web sites; from keeping the circulating collection in good repair to providing network services to the Divinity School; from ensuring safety in buildings visited by thousands of readers daily to making it much easier to renew material that has been checked out. This report acknowledges the diversity of these and other library services. I salute the resolve of the library’s nearly 600 staff and student employees to understand and respond to the nearly infinite variety of readers’ information needs and to improve the quality of reader services in creative and effective ways.

The rest of this report highlights some of the notable events of the past year and describes two fundamental changes in the library that underlie its daily work.

NOTABLE EVENTS OF 1998–1999

- The Franke Family Reading Room in Sterling Memorial Library, home of the current periodical collection and magnificently restored to its original condition, was rededicated in September 1998.
- The Irving S. Gilmore Music Library was dedicated for readers in October 1998. Many describe the new library’s atrium as one of the grandest interior spaces at Yale.
- Late spring brought with it yet another wonderful dedication—that of the Selin Courtyard in the Sterling Memorial Library. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Ivan and Nina Selin, readers and visitors alike enjoy the beauty of this rejuvenated garden.
- The renovation of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library continued with the intentions of providing shelving for as much as another thirty years of collection growth and improving workspace for staff. For most people, the only visible sign of this major project has been the small construction shed on the Wall Street sidewalk.

Barbara and Richard Franke, '53, '87 MAH are joined by daughters, Jane Franke-Molner and Katherine Franke, '93 LLM, '98 JSD at the dedication of the Franke Family Reading Room.

The Selin Family took a brief break from the Selin Courtyard dedication celebration for this photograph with Richard Levin and Scott Bennett.
Construction of the new Library Shelving Facility, in Hamden, was completed and operations began in November. Infrequently used archival records and material from the Arts, Divinity, and Sterling libraries were the first to be transferred to the new facility, with its state-of-the-art preservation conditions. Material from the facility needed by readers is delivered to them in 24 hours or less.

A multi-year effort to clean both the books and the shelving in Sterling Memorial Library and to reshelve the collections there got underway. Long-standing, severe overcrowding of the collections and recent construction conditions had forced the library to shelve material wherever it could, often in ways confusing to readers. The library is pleased to be contracting with the welfare-to-work program of Catholic Family Services for the book stack cleaning part of this project.

Excellent progress was made in the conversion of the library's card catalog to machine-readable form. By June 1999, the library had converted 2.3 million name and subject authority records and 383,700 bibliographic records. The bibliographic records converted included all of the collections at the Divinity, Arts, Beinecke, and Lewis Walpole libraries, and many of the Medical Library records. We will complete the remaining Medical Library records during the current year and begin the systematic conversion of bibliographic records, in alphabetical order, from the Official Card Catalog. We are also undertaking the systematic conversion of card catalog records in non-roman scripts (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Arabic). By June 2000, the library expects to be adding 75,000 converted records to the online catalog monthly. We expect to finish the contracted part of the catalog conversion in 2002 and complete the quality assurance work and the conversion of non-roman script records by 2004.

The Medical and Epidemiology and Public Health libraries, working with the New Haven Free Public Library and the New Haven Department of Health, created “New Haven Health,” a Web site devoted to the public health of the greater New Haven area. It may be consulted at http://www.med.yale.edu/newhavenhealth.

The Advisory Committee on Library Policy, chaired by Professor John Mack Faragher, devoted much of its attention in 1998-99 to preservation matters. The Preservation Department launched a pilot program with Preservation Technologies, Inc., to deacidify material on highly acidic and therefore chemically self-destructive paper.

A joint development effort involving the Arts and Beinecke libraries, Professor Mary Miller, the university's museums, IBM, and Luna Imaging, Inc. made good progress toward providing the Yale community an online capability for using digital images, especially in the classroom. The Beinecke Library led much of the technical development for this project, while the Arts Library led the effort to involve several other institutions nation-wide in the creation of Imaging America—an initial collection of 25,000 images to support teaching in American studies.

Libraries across the campus increased their efforts to provide library instruction attuned to the needs of individual courses and their instructors. These activities varied widely, ranging from an entire course taught by the Divinity Librarian to assignment-specific topics offered by the Engineering Librarian and sessions designed for large introductory courses in English, Film Studies, and History. The History Department has particularly embraced the library’s instructional initiative. The department's research education program now includes an Introduction to Library Research that all History majors must take by the end of their sophomore year.

Night Nurses on Rounds, 1890
Just one of the images from the Photo Gallery on the "New Haven Health" web site.
Two Fundamental Changes in Libraries

Libraries have always been treasure houses of information and knowledge. But only since the middle of the nineteenth century have most libraries become secular and democratic in mission, opening their treasures of knowledge to all members of the communities they serve. In doing this, libraries became centers of community life and a chief embodiment, in America, of the Jeffersonian ideal of an informed citizenry. Such libraries operated on principles of shared, or community-wide ownership of resources in an environment mostly committed to private ownership. Especially from the beginning of the twentieth century, inspired not a little by the benefactions of Andrew Carnegie, fine library buildings were built across the land to give tangible and enduring expression to the high civic function of libraries. Sterling Memorial Library is one such library, declaring in every architectural detail the centrality of knowledge to the Yale community.

Libraries began to automate their operations in the late 1960s, but in its fundamentals, the library even of the 1980s was not much different from the library of the 1930s or the 1890s. The Phase I renovations of Sterling Memorial Library recognized this fundamental continuity in libraries. These first renovations of Sterling focused on ensuring that the physical fabric of our magnificent building would accommodate readers and books as well in the future as it had in the past.

In the mid-1990s, just as Sterling was being renovated for its traditional and enduring functions, a digitally based revolution in scholarly communication was making itself felt everywhere in higher education. Easy and pervasive access to online information via the World Wide Web is now changing the character of libraries in at least two fundamental ways—information ownership and the use of library space—as nothing else has changed it since the middle of the nineteenth-century.

**Information Ownership.** The availability of many information resources at the scholar's and student's desktop brings entirely new dimensions to the traditional effort of libraries to provide convenient access to and communal ownership of information. Increasingly it is no longer necessary to go physically to the library to use its resources. The digital library is a time- and labor-saving institution as the physical library could never be, however it might strive to make itself convenient for readers. Moreover, users of the digital library never find material checked out to someone else; it is always available to them when they want it, much as would be the case with a private library. Readers have almost no sense of sharing anything with anybody else in the digital library. Indeed, the networked desktop computer has practically speaking become an immensely powerful private library for its user. Not surprisingly, readers have welcomed a change that so strongly favors them. The rapid growth in the Yale library's spending on electronic resources responds to strong reader demand.

What makes this change fundamental for the library, as well as for the reader, is that the library rarely owns the online resources its readers use. In the traditional world of print, the library over time built a huge capital resource of information that has enduring value for the university community. In the world of online information, the library—acting on behalf of its readers—ordinarily just licenses resources under specified terms of access for a stated period of time. When the license comes to an end, the library owns nothing and accumulates nothing for future use. This matters fundamentally because the library is newly unable to assure readers of long-term access to information. As one commentator observed, we “must realize that digital access means limited access, unless [libraries] own a copy of the work.”

Through a joint purchase, the Latin American Collection in the Sterling Memorial Library, the Arts Library, and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library acquired a notable collection of photographs by Lorry Salcedo-Mitrani. Shown here are two from Salcedo-Mitrani's collection, “Africa’s Legacy” 1985–1995, that focuses on the black community in Brazil and Peru.
Libraries are deeply concerned about the long-term availability of digital information, and online information providers are beginning to engage with this issue as well. Together, they will probably have to make some changes in today's ownership arrangements. A growing concern among academic authors about the management of their copyrights—a topic addressed in my annual report last year—is also likely to be a significant factor in the needed realignment of ownership stakes. The marketplace in which academics, online information providers, and research libraries interact is less than a decade old. It has been changing rapidly. So there is no reason to believe that today's market reality is immutable. But self-conscious, purposeful action on the part of all academic authors and libraries will be necessary if the library's loss of an ownership position in digital information—a change that has accompanied the provision of online information so valued by readers—does not permanently disadvantage the academic community. Competing objectives between commercial publishers and libraries will complicate making the required changes, but a shared responsibility for effective scholarly communication makes it likely that publishers and libraries will eventually find a way to make the necessary changes.

The Uses of Library Space. An increasingly abundant provision of online information means that readers have fewer reasons to come physically to the library. This reality is evident in the declining circulation figures reported at the end of this report. By contrast, readers have made much more use of the readings rooms in Sterling that have been renovated and of the equally magnificent atrium reading room of the Gilmore Music Library. The library remains a vitally important communal space for readers, even as their uses of library space are changing.

As the university contemplates Phase II renovations of Sterling Memorial Library, it is essential to understand the changing uses of library space. Creating that understanding was at the center of the work of a committee of faculty, students, and library staff that Provost Alison Richard appointed to advise her on how best to direct the next major investment in library renovations. Professor Linda Peterson (chair of the English Department) led the committee from its first meetings in March 1999. In considering the scope of Phase II, the committee came to believe that renovations of the Cross Campus Library and of the entry spaces of Sterling Memorial Library could yield benefits for readers comparable to those achieved in Phase I renovations. A set of public meetings with faculty and undergraduate and graduate students was a notable feature of the committee's work. Library space is a communal resource for everyone at Yale in a way that few other university spaces are. Through its meetings with readers, Professor Peterson's committee sought to understand how library space is used now and how it might be used in the future. The committee also used these meetings to test with readers its own programmatic ideas for Phase II renovations. Just as reader comment helped to inform planning for Phase I renovation, so the Phase II committee engaged members of the community in significant and substantial ways—an innovation in Yale's space planning particularly appropriate for the library.

Two themes inform the committee's report to the Provost. They are (1) the desirability of integrating the Cross Campus Library and Sterling entry floors as much as possible, and (2) the wish to create a Learning Commons for collaborative learning at the center of the newly integrated library spaces. The proposed Learning Commons could possibly be in a number of places on campus, but locating it in the library is one more expression of the instinct so strong at Yale, to surround and support learning quite tangibly with the richest possible information resources. A salient feature of learning at Yale—and especially of learning in Yale College—is the extraordinarily rich information environment in which it occurs. Yale's libraries and museums do much to provide that environment, and Yale's students and faculty self-consciously shape their work to benefit from it.

Professor Peterson's committee submitted its report to Provost Richard in December 1999, and I look forward to reporting next year on the direction and timing of further library renovations.


Nota Bene is published during the academic year to acquaint the Yale community and others interested with the resources and services of the Yale libraries. Please direct comments and questions to Susanne Roberts, Editor, Research Services and Collections Department, Sterling Memorial Library (telephone: 432-1762, e-mail: susanne.roberts@yale.edu)

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Design is by John Gambell and Sandra Chen
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Donor Support

The extraordinary generosity of alumni and friends toward the library is evident—still once more!—in the gifts and pledge payments made in 1998-1999. These gifts totaled $2.8 million for building renovation, $1.2 million in new endowment, and $600,000 as expendable gifts. The readers flocking to our renovated reading rooms to use one of the world's greatest research collections offer daily testimony to the impact of such thoughtful giving.

With the Sterling collections protected by new temperature and humidity controls in the book stacks, the library is focusing still more of its preservation effort on the repair of individual items from the circulating collection damaged through ordinary use. The unit cost of such treatments is normally modest, and our fundamental objective is to ensure that all of our millions of books are ready for use whenever readers need them. We have called on friends and alumni to help support this critical initiative. Among the donors who have recently established named preservation funds were Laurence A. Weiss, M.D., '69 and his wife Judith, who created a fund in honor of Dr. Weiss's parents, Roslyn and Seymour Weiss. Sterling's architecture, Dr. Weiss observed, bespeaks a reverence for the book and learning. The library's preservation program is a natural extension of that reverence. Dr. Weiss commented that "the outstanding libraries of Yale University are the stewards of the past and the midwives of the future. I am delighted that Judy and I were able to support this vital part of a fine institution." I am proud to speak on behalf of the entire library-using community of Yale in thanking Dr. and Mrs. Weiss and the hundreds of other donors who have so generously supported the Yale Library.

Strengthened by such generosity, and with an ongoing investment in print publications matched by few other places in the world, a deep commitment to the preservation of the written record of humanity, and a rich supply of new electronic information resources, the library remains true to its remarkable past and dedicated to helping shape teaching and research at Yale.

—Scott Bennett, University Librarian

Yale University Library Facts for 1998-99

Includes the Medical Library; excludes the Law Library. Collections data excludes Government Documents.

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<tr>
<td>Number of books &amp; serial volumes in the library (30 June 1999)</td>
<td>9,478,240</td>
<td>9,031,493</td>
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<td>Number of serials (journals, annuals, etc.) currently received</td>
<td>49,348</td>
<td>50,330</td>
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<td>Number of volumes added to the collections in FY1999 (net)</td>
<td>176,747</td>
<td>163,591</td>
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<td>Total volume of manuscript &amp; archival holdings (linear feet)</td>
<td>55,168</td>
<td>53,969</td>
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| INSTRUCTION | |
|-------------| |
| Number of classroom sessions & workshops offered | 1,006 | 894 |

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<th>SERVICES AND OPERATIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional and managerial staff (full-time equivalent employees)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clerical and technical staff (full-time equivalent employees)</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student employees (full-time equivalent employees)</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searches in online catalog and citation files (Orbis only)*</td>
<td>3,004,984</td>
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<td>Items charged to readers (first time only)</td>
<td>545,004</td>
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<td>Items requested through Eli Express</td>
<td>13,949</td>
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<td>Number of new full level online records created</td>
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<td>Number of full level records converted to machine-readable form</td>
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<td>Total number of online bibliographic records</td>
<td>3,910,751</td>
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<td>Circulating collection volumes commercially bound</td>
<td>47,091</td>
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<td>Circulating collection volumes repaired</td>
<td>5,162</td>
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<td>Special collections volumes and single sheet items treated</td>
<td>5,177</td>
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* Citation file use not included in 1998-99 figures.
DONOR SUPPORT


New endowment gifts $1.2 $1.0
New gifts for construction 2.8 2.2
New expendable gifts .1 .1
Gifts for current use -.5 -.4
Total of all gifts to the library
(excluding gifts of books, etc.) $4.6 $3.7

Total market value of endowment
(30 June 1999) $565.2 $523.7
Income from endowment 22.0 20.2
Number of endowed funds 518 513

LIBRARY BUDGET ($ millions)

INCOME

University general appropriations $30.3 $29.3
Endowments 15.3 13.7
Grants and contracts .8 .8
Non-operating costs, including construction 16.3 18.1
Gifts and other income (excluding pledges) 6.3 4.6
Total $69.0 $66.5

EXPENDITURES

Compensation $21.8 $21.3
Library collections and binding 16.4 15.4
Equipment, supplies, and services 6.9 6.0
Building alterations and maintenance,
utilities, University assessments 23.9 23.8
Total $69.0 $66.5