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Libraries of State Welfare Institutions

Iowa State Planning Board

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## TRAVELING LIBRARY OF THE STATE OF IOWA

Books are loaned to communities, schools and organizations for three months, to individuals for two to four weeks. All borrowers are requested to return books as soon as need of them is passed.

**INJURIES**—The pages of these books must not be marked and librarians are required to collect fines for injuries beyond reasonable wear. Such fines should be returned with the library.

### Rules for Borrowing Books from a Local Custodian

**BORROWERS**—Adults are entitled to draw books by filling out an application card. Minors must obtain the signature of a responsible person.

**NUMBER OF VOLUMES**—Each borrower may draw one volume at a time, except where a book is issued in more than one volume, when two may be issued.

**TIME KEPT**—Any book may be kept two weeks from date of issue, and may be once renewed for the same period.

**FINES**—A fine of one cent a day shall be paid for each book kept overtime, and any money thus received shall be used by the local library association for library expenses. No book shall be lent to anyone to whom a book or an unpaid fine is charged.





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Libraries of State Welfare Institutions

[Brown, C.H.]

Under "state institutions" are included hospital, penal and correctional institutions, and training schools for boys and girls. In Iowa there are 15 such institutions administered by a State Board of Control.

The World War gave a decided impetus to hospital libraries. Long before the war, however, library service in hospitals and correctional institutions existed. The value of libraries in such institutions is obvious. Inmates have much leisure time. Reading, in the opinion of many doctors, may be of some therapeutic value, at least in stimulating outside interests. Libraries afford means both for study and for recreation. The Veterans Administration maintains library service in its various hospitals with trained librarians in charge and supervisors at Washington. The United States Navy has a similar service in its larger hospitals and some library service in all. City hospitals, as well as other municipal institutions, have a claim upon municipal libraries which is gladly recognized by most libraries. State and federal institutions must of necessity look to the state and federal governments for library support.

Iowa early recognized the value of library service in state institutions. It was the first to appoint a supervising librarian for state institutions. In 1905 Miss Miriam E. Carey was designated as librarian of the 14 institutions then under the State Board of Control. The work was continued under the direction of Miss Carey's successors--Miss Julia A. Robinson, Miss Eliza Townsend, and Miss Grace Shellenberger--until 1919 when the position became vacant. In 1923 after a lapse of four years the librarianship was

filled by Miss Julia Stockett who resigned in 1925. Since 1925 there is no record of the appointment of any librarian to this position.\*

The value of a trained librarian as a library supervisor in state institutions was recognized in an early report of the Board of Control. In the Seventh Biennial Report submitted November 14, 1910, the following statement appears:

"For some years a librarian of state institutions was employed to supervise the library of each institution under our control, to instruct institution librarians and organize library service, to study the needs of the different classes of inmates of the various state institutions, to select books best suited to their needs and to interest inmates in the libraries.

"We found the service rendered by this librarian to be of great value to the state and to the inmates of our institutions. There was less waste in the purchase of books, better selections were made, and their circulation among and use by the inmates was of incalculable benefit. The value of such an officer has been recognized elsewhere, and the plan first adopted in this state has been taken up by other states. The method of payment we found it necessary to adopt was not satisfactory to the librarian and she resigned the position to accept a better position in another state.

"We earnestly recommend that an annual appropriation of \$1,500 be made to pay the salary and necessary traveling expenses of a librarian for this work."\*\*

The Board of Control at that time obtained funds to fill this position. In 1925 and succeeding years it was not so fortunate. For the biennium 1912-14, 5151 books were purchased; for 1930-32 (the latest report available) 2515 books. The average daily population of the institutions in 1930-32, however, was decidedly greater than in 1912-14, being 13,677 as against 9,309. For the two years ending June 30, 1914, 520,651 pieces of reading material were used by the inmates--a remarkable showing, far above the circulation of most public libraries serving a population of similar size. The later reports of the Board of Control do not report use.

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\*Information obtained from the Reports of the Iowa Library Commission.

\*\*Iowa. Board of Control of State Institutions. Seventh biennial report for the biennial period ending June 30, 1910: 42.



Iowa made an excellent beginning in its library service to inmates of state institutions. During the last 15 years, while the service was being greatly extended in institutions of other states and of the national government, Iowa tended to decrease and limit its service. The following statement is quoted from the Report of the Iowa Library Commission 1918-20:

"Iowa is in danger of losing her reputation as a progressive library state, not only by her backwardness in county library matters, but also in the direction in which she took rank as a pioneer, viz. in her institutional library work begun by Miss Miriam E. Carey and continued for a number of years ... Since the resignation of Miss Shellenberger in May, 1919, the position of Supervising Librarian of the State Institutions has been allowed to lapse and the work so well begun and so much needed in these institutions has suffered.

"If books and libraries are of value to those in health, physically, mentally, and morally, far more are they needed by those shut off from the occupations and recreations of normal life and needing the recreation, the inspiration and healing which the reading of books brings."\*

It is regretted that the apparent retrogression in library service in state institutions in Iowa has fulfilled this prophecy made in 1920.

IOWA STATE PLANNING BOARD  
Report on Library Service in Iowa

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\*Iowa Library Commission. Report for 1918/20:18

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