

Still Moving Ohio's Resources

From the Traveling Library to Today

Cindy McLaughlin
*Deputy State Librarian
for Library Services*



In 1896 the State Library of Ohio began a Traveling Library program that grew to be the largest in the country.

A separate collection was purchased and made available throughout the state to a variety of groups. From local libraries to women's clubs, boxes of books were sent for limited periods of time. This was the fastest growing and most widely used program that the State Library had developed at the time. It was developed as a result of inquiries to the State Library by local organizations trying to fill the void of providing materials at the local level. The State Library recognized a need which the citizens of Ohio had and used its resources to meet that need.

The Traveling Library began by sending 50 volumes to two libraries. In 1904 the State Librarian's Annual Report indicated that 30,935 volumes were sent to 966 organizations. This included libraries, granges, schools, and women's clubs, to name a few. By 1934 the Traveling Library circulation had reached over 109,000. This continuing demand for more books required a continually increasing collection. The State Library never seemed to have enough room to adequately house the Traveling Library materials that were kept separate from the state service collection, as it was called.



In 1936 the state aid program was established. This, along with the State Library's library organizer position, assisted in the establishment of additional libraries throughout the state. Through the development of local library collections and standardization of interlibrary loan, libraries could assist patrons on their own. The need for the Traveling Library diminished and in 1973 the 77-year-old program was phased out.

To say that technology has impacted library services is a gross understatement. The possibilities of providing information and sharing resources extend much further than they did in 1896.

Through the initial efforts of OPLIN, a new Statewide Resource Sharing Project, MORE (Moving Ohio's Resources Everywhere), was developed. Ohio citizens are no longer limited to the size of a collection that the State Library can afford to house and send out, nor are they limited to their own local library collection. Through specifically developed technology, anyone in Ohio can access MORE to find out where his or her book(s) might

be located and request that book directly from the library. He is able to check the collection of any participating MORE library. The book(s) will be delivered to his local library for pick up. The patron can then return them to the local library for shipment back to the owning library.

US Cargo is the delivery system for the over 260 school and public libraries and regional systems which are currently participating.

The State Library has made the commitment of time, energy and resources as we continue to move Ohio's resources everywhere to meet the information needs of Ohio's citizens.