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NOTES OF SOME PIONEERS: AMERICA'S FIRST MUSIC LIBRARIANS

BY CAROL JUNE BRADLEY



Music librarianship is a comparatively recent phenomenon in America. Before the founding of the Music Library Association in 1931, pioneering music librarians worked alone in many scattered locations to build music collections and make their resources available to the community.

Although music was represented in American libraries much earlier, it was not until late in the nineteenth century that it gained the recognition of library administrators. W. A. Bardwell's 1887 report on Brooklyn's circulating music collection¹ and Philip H. Goepp's paper before the Pennsylvania Library Club in 1897² are the earliest printed accounts of music-related activities in American libraries. The Pennsylvania Library Club meeting was especially significant for it included responses to questions about handling music in libraries from Messrs. Foster of the Providence Public Library, Bardwell of the Brooklyn Public Library, Putnam of the Boston Public Library, Edmunds of the Mercantile Library of Philadelphia, and Bolton of the Brookline, Massachusetts Public Library. But those men were all heads of libraries, not music librarians. None named the individuals actually working with the music materials in their libraries. One of the first persons known to us to have functioned in a position of responsibility to music materials in an American library is Walter Rose Whittlesey.

Whittlesey, born in Hartford, Connecticut, 5 January 1861, was educated at the Alexandria Academy.³ In 1897 he became first Chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress. Although the Music Division was created by an "appropriation act effective July 1, 1897,"⁴ the Library's materials were still housed in the Capitol awaiting relocation to the newly-completed Library of Congress building. The Library opened in its new building on 1 November 1897, at first from 9:00–4:00 p.m. only. The Music Division opened to the public early in 1898 and began evening service in October 1900.

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¹"A library of music," *Library Journal* 12 (1887): 159.

²"Music libraries," *Library Journal* 23 (1898): 28–29; also in *Public Libraries* 3 (1898): 53–54.

³These few facts are drawn from Whittlesey's entry in *Who's who in library service*, 1933.

⁴*Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1901*, p. 266.

At that time the music collection, though numerically the largest single collection in the United States, consisted almost exclusively of the deposits required by the copyright law. Therefore it consisted chiefly of American compositions or foreign compositions published and copyrighted after the international copyright act of 1891. Most of the collection was sheet music. The literature of music was kept with the general collections, accessible only in the main reading room; music periodicals were in the Periodical Division.

There was no classification scheme; music was simply accessioned. Whittlesey sorted the music by instrument and divided vocal music by sacred and secular, then by number of performers. To lessen the mass of music material he devised a scheme whereby copyright materials undesirable from the Music Division's point of view would be "catalogued briefly" and returned to the Copyright Division for storage.⁵ He began a card catalogue. He petitioned Librarian Herbert Putnam for a permanent location, appropriate furniture and equipment, and increased staff. In particular he asked for an assistant chief "who should be a man possessing good executive ability."⁶ What he got was a demotion: Oscar G. T. Sonneck was hired 1 August 1902 as Chief and Whittlesey reduced to Assistant Chief.⁷ When Sonneck resigned in 1917 Whittlesey became Acting Chief until Carl Engel was named in 1922. Whittlesey was bitter; he is quoted as saying Putnam had "ice water in his veins."⁸ But he remained at the Library until 30 June 1932 when he retired at age 71. Whatever his personal feelings he collaborated with Sonneck on the Stephen Foster catalogue, and he followed Sonneck's advice during his years as Acting Chief. For example, Whittlesey's typescript annual report for 1921 notes that Sonneck had marked the Écorcheville sales catalogue and sent it to be checked against the Music Division's holdings. One hundred and five marked items were lacking, so Whittlesey petitioned Putnam for the money to buy them and cabled the Library's order according to Sonneck's specific instructions. That transaction, reported by Whittlesey himself, appears to characterize his role at the Library of Congress—competent worker subservient to two dom-

⁵Whittlesey, "Annual report for 1901," (Typescript) Music Division Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. p. 7.

⁶Ibid., p. 8.

⁷The professional lives and accomplishments of Sonneck and seven other pioneer American music librarians are the subject of the author's "The genesis of American music librarianship, 1902–1942" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1978). The others are Richard Sloane Angell, George Sherman Dickinson, Carl Engel, Otto Kinkeldey, Eva Judd O'Meara, Carleton Sprague Smith, and Harold Spivacke.

Another account of Sonneck's career is the author's "Oscar G. T. Sonneck: Architect of the 'National Music Collection'" in *Libraries & Culture*, ed. Donald G. Davis, Jr., (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 293–304.

⁸Harold Spivacke, interview with author, Washington, D.C., 10 April 1974.

inant personalities. Although Stephen Foster was Whittlesey's interest, the published catalogue carries Sonneck's name as co-compiler and author of the Prefatory Note.⁹ Even the title-page wording of authorship slights Whittlesey who is described as "Assistant in the Music Division" rather than Assistant Chief.

Whittlesey worked with Josiah K. Lilly collecting Fosteriana and publishing the *Foster Hall Reproductions*¹⁰ which were distributed gratis to one thousand American libraries in 1933. He also compiled a "List of music relating to the World War, 1914–1918" which was published by the Library in 1918.¹¹

Whittlesey died in Washington on 9 April 1936 at the age of 75. There is a photograph in his *Washington Evening Star* obituary, 10 April 1936.

The first Chief of the Music Division of The New York Public Library was Edward Silsky, a Russian lawyer. Silsky, born 18 October 1843 in Dorpat, Livonia, Russia, was educated at the University of Dorpat where he graduated in law in 1873.¹² After several years in municipal and provincial governments, he emigrated to the United States and settled in New York in October 1888. De Bekker says Silsky was "custodian at Columbia University but resigned to take charge of the music division of the Lenox Library, and on its merger with the Drexel Library, assumed charge of the music division and held that post until both libraries were combined with the Central Public Library" meaning the 42nd Street building of The New York Public Library. It is difficult to reconcile the statement that Silsky was already at the Lenox Library when the Drexel bequest was received in 1888 if he settled in New York in October of 1888 and worked at Columbia first. At any rate, when the consolidation of the Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations created The New York Public Library on 23 May 1895, Silsky "came with" the Lenox Library.¹³ Although the 42nd Street building did not open to the public until 23 May 1911, personnel records date Silsky's tenure with the Library from 15 February 1904.

In the 1914 *Proceedings* of the International Music Society Silsky de-

⁹Library of Congress. Music Division. *Catalogue of first editions of Stephen C. Foster (1826–1864)* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1915).

¹⁰Stephen Collins Foster, *Foster Hall Reproductions* (Indianapolis: Privately printed by Josiah Kirby Lilly, 1933).

¹¹Herman H. B. Meyer, *A check list of the literature and other material in the Library of Congress on the European War* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), pp. 211–93.

¹²Biographical information is taken from Leander Jan de Bekker *Music & Musicians* (New York: Nicholas L. Brown, 1925), p. 629. Although I have not been able to reconcile all of de Bekker's statements, I am loathe to disregard a contemporary account of the facts of Silsky's life. The terminal date of Silsky's tenure as Chief, 1916, is in error; Otto Kinkeldey was named Chief 15 March 1915.

¹³Philip L. Miller, interview with author, New York City, 8 June 1974.

scribed his collection "as mainly historical, . . . the limited appropriations for the Music Division have enabled it to do little towards providing investigators with the music-publications of the last fifty years."¹⁴ Of the 12,000 volume collection, 6,000 were the Drexel bequest, 4,000 the Astor Library, and 2,000 the acquisitions since consolidation. Despite its size, the collection was well used; Silsky included statistics for 1913 which averaged three user requests per volume for the year! Perhaps the Library's hours contributed to those healthy figures: Silsky and his assistant, Mrs. Joachim Anderson, manned the Music Division 365 days a year from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. weekdays, 1:00 to 10:00 p.m. Sundays.¹⁵

In 1915 Otto Kinkeldey, the American musicologist who had been teaching at the University of Breslau, Germany, returned to the United States because of World War I; on March 15 he was appointed Chief of the Music Division. At some point Silsky retired and returned to Russia to live with his son. Unfortunately the son both spent Silsky's money and turned him out of the house. Somehow Silsky managed to return to New York where the Library re-hired him as a consultant in the Music Division. In February of 1930 he retired a second time and entered the Home for Old Men and Aged Couples on Amsterdam Avenue. He died there on 16 July 1938 at age 95.

Barbara Duncan may have been the first woman to make music librarianship a career. Born in Boston, 21 June 1882, and educated in the public schools there, she began her career in 1907 as an assistant in the Fine Arts Department of the Boston Public Library. In 1909 she was named custodian of the Allen A. Brown collection of music. That collection, given to the Boston Public Library upon completion of the Copley Square building in 1894, included almost 7,000 books and scores in which Brown pasted clippings, criticism, programs, and ticket stubs. At the time of his gift, Brown placed certain conditions on the collection: the volumes were for reference use only; they could be used only in the room in which they were housed; the Library was to publish a book catalogue of the collection; and Brown was to have free access to it at all times and be permitted to make additions as he wished. It was not Brown's intention that the Library provide a piano or other instrument for trying out or playing through the scores; their use was re-

¹⁴"The Music Division of The New York Public Library," *International Musical Society Proceedings* 9 (1914): 211-14.

¹⁵Miller interview. There is a photograph of Silsky in Miller's history of the NYPL Music Division, *Notes* 35 (1979): 539.

stricted to those who could read a score and hear the music in their heads.

The preparation of the catalogue, designed by Edward Browne Hunt, Chief Cataloguer of the Library, was completed during Duncan's tenure. In addition to Brown's continuing additions, other gift materials and items purchased with library funds were added to the Brown collection which, as a reference collection, became more complete, more scholarly than the circulating collection.

Whether or not she consulted with Brown before 1909, it is clear Duncan observed his methods and philosophy during the seven years between her 1909 appointment and his death in 1916. A collection policy written in 1925 (after Duncan had left Boston) for both the Boston Public Library's circulating department and the Brown collection is filled with information about Brown's practices and philosophy as well as Duncan's own appraisal of the strengths, weaknesses and desiderata of both collections.

In 1922 Duncan was named Librarian of the Sibley Music Library of the Eastman School of Music succeeding W. K. Porter who served for about a year, 1920–21. The situation in Rochester was described by University Librarian Donald B. Gilchrist.

Several years ago Mr. Hiram W. Sibley of this city gave to the University about 2000 volumes of music. They were cataloged and classified at that time very carefully and have been used a great deal by the musically inclined in Rochester since that time.

Mr. George Eastman . . . has this last year given a School of Music to the University, with a two million dollar building now being erected and an endowment of about three million. At about the time of this gift Mr. Sibley augmented his collection by a further gift of about 3000 volumes which have been coming in by the case for the past few months. This collection is housed in the University Library, and will remain there, for the immediate present, at least. This great addition necessitates the reclassification of the whole collection, and of course all the new books will have to be completely cataloged, a task which will swamp the present cataloging force.

Mr. Sibley has recently expressed his willingness to provide the salary for a curator for his collection, whose first task it would be to supervise the classification and cataloging of the collection, and who would serve to interpret the collection to the public, and assist the music school in their use of the collection.¹⁶

Duncan left Boston in late May 1922 for a trip to New York and Washington timed to assure her arrival in Rochester by the first of June. In

¹⁶Donald B. Gilchrist to Elizabeth A. Schmitter, 21 February 1920. Sibley Music Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.

New York City she interviewed Elizabeth Schmitter for the position of cataloguer for the new library. From Gilchrist's updated description, it is easy to see how each lady's professional life would proceed.

We finally have succeeded in transferring the Sibley Musical Library to the new Eastman School of Music where it will be in a large open room something after the order of the New York Public department reading rooms with an ultimate capacity of 40,000 volumes and 100 readers.¹⁷

Duncan began by scouring the catalogues of European antiquarian dealers. Her big chance came when she distinguished herself by her bidding at the Wolffheim auction in Berlin. The auction, held in two sessions, 13–16 June 1928 and 3–8 June 1929, was to sell the private library of Dr. Werner Wolffheim, German musicologist and collector. Duncan had \$50,000 at her disposal; the money represented part of Sibley's contribution to the Greater University of Rochester campaign in 1924. At the Wolffheim sale she bought 300 items including an eleventh century codex considered "the prize of the collection."¹⁸

Duncan made numerous summer buying trips to Europe, dealing in person with the antiquarians whose catalogues she perused constantly. She also bought from street vendors and manuscript dealers. One contemporary account notes that Duncan "received her training in the Boston Public Library when Allen A. Brown gathered the now famous collection that bears his name in the Boston Library. Mr. Brown roamed through Europe gathering famous autographs, authoritative criticisms, clippings, portraits and even ticket stubs of Paris and Vienna concerts presented by notables of the music world."¹⁹ Duncan clearly recognized the value of collecting on-site, but it is doubtful she emulated Brown's practice of "carrying lists in his pocket for years and crossing items off as found."²⁰ Many of her European purchases were unica, items not possible to duplicate. In 1929, in addition to her Wolffheim purchases, she bought the holograph of Debussy's *La mer* and the "catalogue of Beethoven's library in which are listed not only its contents but the price estimates set by his executors on the various items in it."²¹ Another summer she bought two pages in Beethoven's hand which turned out to be from the composer's "Skizzen zur Missa Solemnis," last sold by Otto

¹⁷Donald B. Gilchrist to James I. Wyer, 16 April 1921. Sibley Music Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.

¹⁸"Rare and notable additions for Sibley Music Library made by European purchases," *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, 22 December 1929.

¹⁹"Barbara Duncan finds adventure in work at Music Library," *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, 30 May 1934.

²⁰Barbara Duncan, "Outline for development of Music Division of the Boston Public Library, including the Allen A. Brown and circulating collections." 28 May 1925. Sibley Music Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.

²¹"Rare and notable additions."

Haas in 1911, minus the pages now in the Sibley Music Library. By 1940 she had gathered fifteen incunabula. Charles Warren Fox described her knack for acquisitions as "uncanny."²² In addition to Duncan's experience in Boston, Fox attributed her success to study and hard work: "She used to spend about, I should say, one third of her life simply going through antiquarian catalogues and following auctions."

By 1937 when the Sibley Music Library moved out of the Eastman School of Music into its own newly-constructed building, the collection had grown from 7,000 volumes to 42,000 of which there were "more than twice as many scores as books about music."²³

Duncan, present at the formation of the Music Library Association on 22 June 1931, served as its first Secretary, 1931–34 and Secretary-Treasurer, 1934–39. As Secretary she was responsible for duplicating and distributing the Music Library Association's *Provisional list of subject headings for music based on the Library of Congress classification* (1933) and several issues of the First Series of *Notes*. She was a member of the Western New York Chapter of the American Musicological Society and sometimes attended the Coolidge Chamber Music Festivals in Washington, D. C. From the 1925/26 season through the 1944/45 season she wrote the program notes for the Rochester Philharmonic and continuity for the orchestra's radio broadcasts. Duncan's published writings include a description of the Boston Public Library's music collections in the first music issue of *Library Journal* (August 1915), an account of the Allen A. Brown libraries in the *Bulletin* of the Boston Public Library (1922), several descriptions of the Sibley Music Library and specific acquisitions, and reviews in *Notes*, volumes 8, 9, and 10.²⁴

She retired as Librarian of the Sibley Music Library in 1947 but stayed on the staff of the University of Rochester Library until June of 1952 in order to be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits. In 1965 she was awarded one of the first group of Music Library Association citations. The citation was presented to Duncan, then in a Rochester nursing home, by Catharine and Philip L. Miller. She died 8 November 1965 at the age of 83. There are photographs of her in the *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle* (22 May 1927) and in *Notes*, June 1981.

²²Charles Warren Fox, interview with author, Gloversville, New York, 12 May 1981.

²³Barbara Duncan, "Music isn't books," *Special Libraries* 31 (February 1940): 56.

²⁴In addition to the articles cited in notes 23 and 28, Duncan published an account of the Boston situation, "Our own music collection," *Library Life* 1 (15 February 1922): 52–53; "An exhibition of music," *Library Life* 1 (15 March 1922): 63–64; "Music from the library point of view," *ALA Bulletin* 21 (1927): 331–32, an abstract of her paper before the fourth annual Art Reference Round Table at the ALA conference in Toronto, 24 June 1927; "Sibley Library of Rochester adds new and valuable collections," *Musical Courier* (11 January 1930): 19; "Sibley Music Library," *University of Rochester Library Bulletin* 1 (February 1946): 26–29; "Falling leaves," *Notes* 6 (1948–49): 118–21; and "Home, sweet home," *University of Rochester Library Bulletin* 4 (Winter 1949): 21–25.

In its second year, librarian Charles Ammi Cutter began to buy music for his Forbes Library in Northampton, Massachusetts. He laid the "foundation" of a "musical department by putting on the shelves the complete works, in Breitkopf & Härtel's excellent editions, of Beethoven, Chopin, Grétry, Mozart, Palestrina, Schubert, Schumann, Schutz, and Johann Strauss."²⁵ The library already had the complete editions of Bach and Händel. In 1902 music became a separate department with its own curator, charging desk, and catalogue. The first curator, Alice L. Rose who resigned in 1903 was succeeded by Nell M. Clapp. When Clapp resigned in 1913 to be married, Henrietta Beatrice Schmitter was named Assistant in Charge of the Music Department. Henrietta, born 13 February 1887 in Northampton, had no library training. After high school she took a business course and then a position under "a tyrant of a man" who made so many demands on her she became ill and resigned.²⁶ In 1907, she became a secretary to C. A. Cutter's nephew, William Parker Cutter, then librarian of the Forbes Library. Henrietta was very happy in library work and Cutter encouraged her interest so that she moved from secretarial to librarian responsibilities.

Under her care the music department flourished, representing six or seven per cent of the total library's circulation each year. In 1922 Ethel Louise Lyman resigned as Head of the library's Art Department to become Music Librarian at Smith College. Henrietta Schmitter assumed responsibility for art and in 1924 the two departments were officially combined under her care. She retired from the Forbes Library in 1957 after a tenure of fifty years. She died 8 June 1973 in Northampton. Henrietta was present at the founding of the Music Library Association, 22 June 1931.

Her older sister, Elizabeth, born 30 August 1884, wanted to be either an accompanist or a librarian. An accomplished pianist and organist, Elizabeth accompanied singers, instrumentalists, and choruses. For seven years she was in charge of the music department of the Northampton store to which Smith College students were sent to buy music. Eventually she took the Springfield (Massachusetts) Library's training course. A practical program, it involved both formal courses in cataloguing and reference with hands-on experience in each department of the library. After graduation Elizabeth stayed at the Springfield Library for several months to work on its song index. In 1913 she took her first library position which, like Henrietta's, was under W. P. Cutter who had left Forbes to become librarian of the United Engineering Society in New

²⁵Notice, probably by C. A. Cutter, in the *Hampshire Gazette* (Northampton, MA), 20 November 1896.

²⁶Elizabeth Schmitter, interview with author, Northampton, MA, 2 October 1973.

York City. From there she went to the Documents and Economics Division of The New York Public Library where she disliked the "miserable, little picayune doings."²⁷ When a friend left the New Jersey Zinc Company, Elizabeth took over her position as head cataloguer. Although she was very happy at the New Jersey Zinc Company, she still had a desire to be associated with music. In February of 1920 Joel Har-riston, then librarian at Forbes, received a letter from Donald B. Gilchrist, University of Rochester librarian, about a vacancy for a music curator at the Sibley Music Library in Rochester. Henrietta did not care to leave Northampton but suggested Elizabeth to whom a combination of music and library work was very appealing. After a year-and-a-half wait, during which time the curator's position was filled by Barbara Duncan, Elizabeth assumed her duties as cataloguer on 13 July 1922. She reported that Gilchrist loved to joke that he had to go to the New Jersey Zinc Company to get his music cataloguer!

Barbara Duncan chose the Library of Congress classification for Sibley so the existing nucleus of materials transferred from the University of Rochester campus had to be recatalogued. Elizabeth "started a new catalogue" and was "responsible for subject headings." Despite Schmitter's years of cataloguing experience, Duncan insisted upon revising her work, "a bone of contention" because Duncan did not know "too much about cataloguing" and because she would let the cataloguing pile up so long the materials were on the shelf before the revision was completed. Typographical rather than classification errors were the rule—Elizabeth created a handwritten master card from which her typist produced the set of cards.

Elizabeth stayed in Rochester until 1 August 1949 when she retired from Sibley at the start of her summer vacation; she returned to Northampton where she worked with Henrietta at the Forbes as an hourly assistant until 1954. There she catalogued "things that had been pushed aside for a long time," old hymnals, for instance. Subsequently both Elizabeth and Henrietta worked at the Northampton School for Girls cataloguing its music library. Elizabeth ended her working life as an assistant to the librarian of the Hillyer Art Gallery at Smith College.

Reflecting on their careers Elizabeth mused: "We were certainly pioneers. . . . We had to find our own way." She died 3 April 1980 at 95 years of age. There is a photograph of her in the Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle*, 22 May 1927.²⁸

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Barbara Duncan, "Music library furnishing indispensable aid to music development of city," Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle*, 22 May 1927.

Jessica Fredricks organized and developed the San Francisco Public Library's Music Department. Born in San Francisco, 29 September 1887, her education was "sketchy." She described her father as "a natural born wanderer" so Fredricks's education "ranged from kindergarten in Seattle to elementary schools in San Francisco and Alameda, then to grammar school in Mexico and finally two years in a convent boarding school in Las Cruces, New Mexico."²⁹ Her brief high school experience of three months duration was in San Rafael, California. Fortunately she was a prodigious reader. Later Fredricks "took a course in reference work from someone in the U. C. library" and a correspondence course in librarianship. She studied at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music intermittently from 1915–34.

In 1915 Fredricks began as a substitute in the San Francisco Public Library. At first she was assigned in both the branches and the main library, then in temporary quarters as a result of the earthquake and fire of 1906. A new central building, with space for a music department, was about to open. Fredricks, teaching piano as well as working in the Library, asked if she might be assigned there. She was, as an assistant, for about a year. Then in 1917 when the Library opened, she was made Head, a position she retained until her retirement in October of 1950.

From the beginning "there was little encouragement for a music department" and Fredricks had "to work hard to prove its worth." Her personal goal was to respond to the needs of the public and make the department outstanding among public music libraries.

Most of the department's services grew out of the needs of the public. For instance, the calendar of musical events was a "natural" after hearing the cries of disappointment from music teachers who unknowingly scheduled their own or their pupils' recital in competition with a Heifetz, Horowitz, or other renowned artist. After a grand piano was bequeathed to the Library, music teachers could schedule their recitals in the Library's Assembly Room rather than in a rented hall. There was a posted list of amateur musicians needing others with whom to play or sing. The need was specified, for example, "singer wishing an accompanist," and identified by number only. Respondents would ask at the desk for the identification of the singer and make contact on his or her own. Unwanted tickets were exchanged in the same manner.

Periodicals were indexed from the very start of the department. *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* was kept up-to-date and interleaved with blank sheets on which information about local musicians

²⁹Quoted passages are from a lengthy autobiographical letter to the author, 2 July 1973.

was entered. Clippings and programs were pasted onto sheets and bound by year. San Francisco Opera and Symphony programs were indexed by compositions, composers, dates, and performers. Fredricks began a collection of old popular songs, bound and arranged by date so that one could determine which songs had been popular at a given point in time. Autographs were collected in the Department's own book, from letters, from artists after concert performances, and from donors.

The collection built on the nucleus already in the Library. To it were added gift collections of orchestral scores and parts and Spanish folk songs. Vocal scores of operas were bought with funds donated by the family of a local singer. There was an unusual collection of piano music—solo, 4 and 8 hands—which was the result of the efforts of a local musician, Julius Waybur, who wrote to eastern publishers for donations after the loss of most of the music collection in the 1906 fire. Gifts were actively solicited and well-publicized.

Lack of staff and space prevented the establishment of a record collection for either listening or circulation. Staff was a critical issue throughout Fredricks's tenure; until shortly before she retired Fredricks had but one assistant librarian and some part-time help. As she put it: "You can hardly credit what a small staff we had."³⁰

Fredricks was a member of the American Library Association, the Music Library Association, and the Special Libraries Association in which she was very active. In 1938 she founded the San Francisco or Northern California Chapter of the MLA. She published several articles descriptive of her library and its work,³¹ *Book lists on music and musicians* were issued by the Library in 1933, and *California composers: Biographical notes* for the California Federation of Music Clubs, 1934.

At her retirement in 1950 she was presented with a citation of commendation for her thirty-five years' service, one of only two such awards ever given by the Library Commissioners. Fredricks retired to Mexico where she died 28 January 1979 at age 91. There is a photograph in her *Music Journal* article, May–June 1946.

Although the Library in Los Angeles had been circulating music for some years and music was reported in the collection from 1889, the Art

³⁰Fredricks to author, 8 August 1973.

³¹They are: "The library's part in San Francisco's musical life," *ALA Bulletin* 23 (1929): 289, abstract of her paper read at the sixth annual Art Reference Round Table, ALA conference in Washington, D.C., 15 May 1929; "A typical circulating music library," *Notes*, 1st series, no. 6 (November 1938): 10; "The music library and the private teacher," *Music Teachers' National Association Proceedings* 35 (1940): 157–61; "In lighter moments," *Notes* 2 (December 1944): 51–52; "Building a music department in the public library," *Music Journal* 4 (May–June 1946): 17, 59–64; and "The music library: development of collection and services," *Notes: Supplement for Members* No. 8 (June 1949): 10–14.

and Music Department of the Los Angeles Public Library was not founded until June of 1914 when the Library moved into a new building. Gladys Caldwell was named Head in 1922. Born 29 September 1884 in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, Caldwell was educated at the State Normal School in Santa Barbara, 1909–11; the Los Angeles Public Library's Library School, 1918–19; and the University of California where she earned her B. A. in 1922. Originally she planned a career as concert pianist but she injured "her right hand or fingers while practicing Chopin's Black Key Etude and had to give up her aspirations."³²

After library school Caldwell worked in the Santa Barbara Public Library as a desk attendant from 1919 to 1921 before assuming her position in the Los Angeles Public Library. There she built up a general collection similar to San Francisco's although the one in Los Angeles was always numerically larger. At his death in 1937 William Andrews Clark, Jr. bequeathed his library of orchestral scores and parts to the Public Library. It was the development of that circulating orchestral library, begun with Clark's bequest, that Caldwell considered her prime achievement. The collection "is still maintained and heavily used."³³

The Los Angeles Public Library differed somewhat from San Francisco's in that it tried to meet the needs of graduate students and the faculty at the University of Southern California and the University of California at Los Angeles. Sometime after 1938 when he began his teaching career at UCLA, Walter Rubsamen was asked by Caldwell to compile "a comprehensive list of historical, monumental editions of music and music books" which she then acquired. "As a result the music dept. has an excellent collection of many scholarly books . . . all original editions."³⁴

Caldwell was a member of the American Library Association in which she was active in the Art Reference Round Tables where art and music issues were discussed. The crowded sessions at ALA meetings provided the only professional affiliation for music librarians until 1931 when the Music Library Association was formed. She was the first chairperson of the Southern California Chapter of the MLA, founded in October of 1941. In 1942 she initiated work on a union list of reference works in Southern California libraries which was eventually published under the editorship of Helen Azhderian (1953). Caldwell wrote the report of a California Library Association committee which investigated methods of storing music (*Public Libraries* June 1925) and a description

³²Joan M. Meggett to author, 29 May 1985.

³³Mel Rosenberg to author, 25 April 1985.

³⁴Quotes from Meggett, op. cit.

of her library in *Music and Dance in California* (1940). She retired in 1948 and lived in Southern California until her death, 19 January 1979.

Richard Gilmore Appel succeeded Barbara Duncan as Chief of the Music Division of the Boston Public Library. Born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 25 April 1889, Appel was educated at Franklin & Marshall College there (A.B., 1908), Columbia (1909–10), New England Conservatory of Music (1910–11), Harvard (1912–13, A.M., 1912), and the University of Heidelberg (1913). An organist and composer, Appel located first in Boston in 1910 as organist and instructor at the Episcopal Theological School while he continued his academic training. After his study in Heidelberg he returned to Boston where he taught at the Browne and Nichols School in Cambridge. When he lost that position in 1922 he wrote Carl Engel at the Library of Congress who suggested he apply for Duncan's former position at the Boston Public Library.

Appel quickly put his stamp on the activities of the oldest public library music collection in the United States. During his tenure as Chief, 1922–54, the Music Department was especially active as liaison between the public and Boston's concert activity. Appel presented "A series of lectures with music" to support Boston's opera and symphony concerts. These lectures, by area professors, visiting scholars, composers, and Appel himself, were sponsored jointly by the Library and the Massachusetts Division of University Extension. To support the lectures, Appel compiled "Aids to Study" which reproduced the forthcoming "Programme," a list of editions available in the Boston area (with, as well as call numbers, location sigla if the volumes were also in a library other than the BPL), and a calendar of future lecture and concert dates. An interesting feature was the policy of inviting composers to discuss their own works; most contemporary composers participated at one time or another during the twenty-year series (1925–45). There were also "Aids to Study" or "Reading Lists" for chamber music concerts, operas, ballets, and music weeks.

Other unique services of the Music Department were: (1) the Scrapbooks: "Boston Musical Season" 1923/24–1936/37; and scrapbooks compiled to document single events or subjects like the arrest of Carl Muck, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, or obituaries. (2) The First Performance File, which emphasizes the Boston and New England area but is worldwide in scope. (3) The Obituary File which includes Boston area musicians who are not likely to be included in standard reference books. Today that is the most frequently used service of the Music Department. The Boston papers, *The New York Times*, and the *Sunday London Times* are the newspapers clipped and indexed.

As early as 1925 Appel sought professional affiliation. In 1925, while

he was in Washington, D. C. in connection with the Coolidge chamber music concerts in the Boston Public Library, he invited Oscar Sonneck and Barbara Duncan to a luncheon in the hope of starting an organization, but Sonneck was unable to attend and nothing came of the idea. About the same time Appel began a series of meetings with Boston-area music librarians and C. C. Birchard in which issues appropriate for discussion by music librarians were identified. Appel remembered the participants of the group to have been Leo Lewis of Tufts University, Mary Thayer of the New England Conservatory of Music and representatives of Harvard University, the Harvard Musical Association, the Boston Athenaeum, and Wellesley College as well as Birchard.³⁵ Appel was present at the formation of the Music Library Association in June of 1931. His particular interest within the MLA was indexes to periodicals.

Appel published extensively, both literary and musical works. His major contribution to the literature of music librarianship is a survey of "The American music library, past, present, and future."³⁶ In 1975 his edition of the Bay Psalm Book was published by the Institute for Studies in American Music. In 1941, as a feature of the American Library Association meetings in Boston, the Boston Pops played his arrangement of Bach's *Jesu, joy of man's desiring*.

Appel died 18 November 1975 at age 86. He continued to be a church organist until the year before his death. In addition to MLA, Appel was a member of the Special Libraries Association, the American Guild of Organists, and the Harvard Musical Association. There is a photograph in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 May 1954.

Even before 1919 there was "a whole row of miniature scores of Beethoven symphonies" in the 58th Street branch of The New York Public Library.³⁷ The original branch librarian, a contralto named Pauline Leipsiger and her successor, Eunice Wilson, had added as much music as possible. In 1920, Dorothy Lawton, a pianist and piano teacher, joined the staff to develop the official music collection of the NYPL branch system. The decision to establish a music library there was made in consideration of the geographic location of the branch—Liederkrantz Hall and the New York College of Music were in the same block—and the size of the existing music collection.³⁸

³⁵Correspondence and interview with Richard G. Appel, Boston, Mass., 4 October 1973.

³⁶In *One hundred years of music in America*, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York: G. Schirmer, 1961), pp. 245–56.

³⁷Gladys Chamberlain, interview with author, New York City, 13 July 1974.

³⁸Facts from the "Report of the Director: Music Collection," *The New York Public Library Bulletin* 25 (1921): 241.

Lawton, born 31 July 1874 in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England, emigrated to the United States with her family at the age of eight.³⁹ In New York she studied piano with Carl Hermann, a pupil of Liszt; John Brady, and Sigismund Stojowski. She began her teaching career at fifteen, and during World War I she worked in the Music Division of the library at 42nd Street.⁴⁰

When Lawton began at the 58th Street branch in 1920, the music and books were collected in a small alcove at the rear of the first floor. Some library funds were used to buy miniature scores of orchestral works but many acquisitions were begged or bought with money donated to the "Music Library Fund . . . by friends of the Branch."⁴¹ In the first year the collection and its circulation doubled in size. By 1923 several series of concerts were being presented at the branch. On 1 October 1924 the collection was officially designated the "Music Library" of the Circulation Department of The New York Public Library.⁴² Having outgrown its first floor alcove, the new Music Library was moved to the front half of the second floor. By 1930 the Children's Room, which had originally occupied the whole second floor, was removed entirely to give the Music Library more space. The landings on the stairs leading to both the ground and third floors were used to shelve the collected works.

Lawton was particularly able at procuring donations. For example, individual composers' collected works were purchased for the library by various donors. Lawton even compiled lists of music to be purchased by prospective donors during their summer trips abroad. Proceeds from a performance of modern music by the League of Composers on 25 March 1928 began the Music Library's record collection.⁴³ The following year both RCA Victor and Columbia allowed Lawton to choose from their catalogues as many records as she wished for the collection. Lawton made several acquisition trips to Europe where she secured gifts from publishers and bought with donated funds only, as New York City funds were adequate only to cover replacements and binding, "the most important and expensive item" in the Library's budget.⁴⁴

³⁹*Who's who in library service* (1933) and personnel records in The New York Public Library cite 1881 as Lawton's birthdate; *Baker's biographical dictionary of music and musicians* (6th and 7th eds.) and *The New Grove* give 1874. Both *The New York Times* and *Herald-Tribune* obituaries give Lawton's age as 85 at the time of her death. If she was born in 1874, she was 70 when she retired from The NYPL in 1945. At that time the Library had mandatory retirement at age 65 and there were no social security benefits; perhaps Lawton needed to continue working and simply adjusted her birthdate accordingly.

⁴⁰Biographical facts drawn from Lawton's obituaries in *The New York Times* and *Herald-Tribune*.

⁴¹"Report of the Director: Music Collection," *The New York Public Library Bulletin* 26 (1922): 301.

⁴²"Report of the Director: Music Library," *The New York Public Library Bulletin* 29 (1925): 238.

⁴³Facts from Peter Hugh Reed, "Library to collect music-discs," *Musical America* 47 (17 March 1928): 17.

⁴⁴Unsigned document "The pulse of New York's musical life as shown through the circulation of its Music Library." 1931, probably by Dorothy Lawton. High binding costs led Lawton, Chamberlain,

In 1927 Lawton began systematically to collect materials about the dance. In 1933 when "emergency workers" in the Work Relief Projects (later the Works Projects Administration) were assigned projects, some of them collected clippings and compiled a bibliography of material on dance in general books in the libraries of museums, theological seminaries, and similar institutions.

In 1930 the library of the American Orchestral Society, a training orchestra conducted by Chalmers Clifton, was deposited in the Music Library. Through the efforts of the staff of the Music Library, orchestras of unemployed musicians were formed to play in schools and other libraries. These groups, as well as the successor to the AOS, the National Orchestral Association, used parts from the Music Library. From its current location in Lincoln Center, the orchestra collection continues to maintain an important service to member orchestras in the New York metropolitan area.

Both the W.P.A. emergency workers and the staff worked to produce a general clipping file. Newspapers, magazines, and anything else available was clipped, the clippings pasted onto 8½ by 11" sheets stored alphabetically in folders in filing drawers. There was also a W. P. A. music copying project which provided parts for the orchestral library, missing pages from scores, and entire orchestrations of some American compositions. The staff maintained a card index of elusive information, interesting or recurrent reference questions, and guides to information in odd or unexpected places.

The Music Library functioned as a sort of musical clearinghouse, willing to extend its services almost infinitely to meet the needs of New York musicians and musical public. When the music for a vocal recital was lost, the staff of the Music Library was able to find replacements—in the proper keys. During World War II, records for concerts, parts for orchestras and bands, chamber music, choruses and books of music history, theory, and biography were sent to military camps throughout the middle Atlantic regions. On Sundays servicemen could come into the Library to play instruments loaned by friends of the Music Library. Lawton took great pride in the routine statement on NYC concert programs that "scores of the works performed on this program may be obtained at the Fifty-eighth Street Music Library."

Lawton was deeply committed to contemporary music and especially supportive of young composers. Among other activities she served as

and Miller to spend significant amounts of time working with binderies to develop cheap, light bindings for certain kinds of scores and parts; their findings were reported in the cited articles to benefit all music librarians.

secretary of the American branch of the International Society for Contemporary Music for a number of years. From about 1935 Lawton taught a course in music librarianship at the New York College of Music.⁴⁵ During the summers of 1930 and 1931 she established a music department in the American Library in Paris. A member of both the American Library Association and the Music Library Association—she was present at the formation meeting, 22 June 1931—she published articles advocating music in libraries in the *ALA Bulletin* (1920) and *The Etude* (1940), and discussed “Binding problems in music” in *Notes* (November 1937). From its less than one thousand items in 1920, the Music Library grew to 10,000 books on music, 30,000 scores and many thousands of records by the time of her retirement.⁴⁶

Lawton retired in 1945 and returned to England a year later. There she developed the music division of the Buckingham Palace Road Library and organized the Central Music Library in London. She lived in London until late 1958 when she went to a nursing home in Bournemouth, where she died 19 February 1960. There is a photograph of Lawton in her *Etude* article.

Gladys Chamberlain joined the staff of the 58th Street Music Library in New York in mid-May 1927. Born in Portland, Maine, 3 August 1890, she was educated in public and private schools there and at Bryn Mawr College where she was awarded a B.A. in 1912. From 1913 to 1916 she was assistant employment secretary for the New York YWCA and from 1916 to 1918 a social worker for the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church.

In 1919 she married Philip Greeley Clapp, American composer and teacher. January 1920 she moved to Iowa City where Clapp was head of the Music Department of the State University of Iowa. There Chamberlain participated in several music appreciation courses under Clapp and took harmony and Carl Seashore’s “Psychology of Music” for academic credit with a view toward eventually pursuing a graduate degree.

1927 found her back in New York City, 36 years old, and only experienced in work she did not want to do—social work.⁴⁷ While in Iowa she had volunteered to help add music materials to the University Library, which “had almost no books at all about music;”⁴⁸ using Louisa

⁴⁵Gladys Chamberlain, “Courses in music librarianship,” *Notes* 1 (June 1944): 49.

⁴⁶Figures from Lawton’s *New York Times* obituary.

⁴⁷Chamberlain and Clapp were divorced in 1929; she returned to her maiden name.

⁴⁸Quotes from Gladys Chamberlain, interview with author, New York City, 13 July 1974.

Hooper's *Selected list of music and books about music for public libraries*,⁴⁹ Chamberlain tried to build up the music collection. That pleasant experience convinced her that she wanted to be a music librarian. But at that time The New York Public Library was "discontinuing hiring librarians who had no library school background," although this made it difficult for them to find anyone "who knew anything at all about music." In a compromise, Chamberlain was hired on the condition she attend the Library's own library school.

Chamberlain became Librarian of the Music Library in 1945 when Dorothy Lawton retired. Before that she served a six-month period as Acting Chief of the Music Division in the 42nd Street building while Carleton Sprague Smith was on leave in South America. After her own retirement in 1955 she worked part-time in the genealogical library of the National Society of Colonial Dames and in Columbia's Teachers College library.

Her "irregular"—as she called it—preparation for music librarianship convinced her that "proper language training, considerable music training, and an out-going feeling of friendship" were ideal qualifications for music librarians in public libraries. She derived great satisfaction in the feelings of patrons for the 58th Street Music Library. As long as she lived people would approach her on the bus, at concerts, or at receptions to thank her for some long-forgotten kindness or to comment on the positive influence the Library had had on their lives. "A lot of people connected with music had this warm feeling for that library because of what it offered them," she later reflected.

Chamberlain was one of a trio of extraordinary women who created a unique atmosphere and quality of service in the 58th Street Music Library. On the fiftieth anniversary of its founding Edward Downes, the eminent opera historian, said: "They made my life a better one. You can't say that of everyone, but you can say it of a really good librarian."⁵⁰

Chamberlain was Secretary-Treasurer of the Music Library Association from 1939–41 and a member of the Association's committee to develop a code for cataloguing records. She published several articles including a survey of "Courses in Music Librarianship" (*Notes*, June 1944), a description of "Phonograph records in public libraries" (*Music Journal*, May–June 1946), and an article about binding music (*Library Journal* 1

⁴⁹Hooper began as an assistant in the Brookline Public Library in 1895; she was librarian from 1902 to 1940. Her publication, which included Brookline's classification tables and subject headings, was the first ALA imprint (1909). Chamberlain thought Hooper "courageous" to venture into print in such an uncharted area.

⁵⁰Barbara Fischer-Williams, "Half-century of service," *Opera News* 39 (November 1974): 34.

November 1951). She was a regular attendee at Music Library Association meetings, even attending those in New York City after her retirement. She died 14 December 1978 at age 88.

The third librarian of the 58th Street Music Library was Catharine Keyes Miller. Born 25 April 1905 in Mt. Vernon, Iowa, she began her education there, at Cornell College, in 1923. In 1925 she transferred to Oberlin where she earned a B. Mus. in 1927, and was elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa. In 1927/28 she taught piano at the Wainwright Conservatory of Music in Fostoria, Ohio. From 1928 to 1931 she was an instructor of piano and theory at the College of Wooster (Ohio). From there she went to Columbia University where she received a B.L.S. in 1932. Until 1934 she was a reference assistant in the Music Division of The New York Public Library; then she became Chief of the music cataloguing section in the Library's Preparation Division. At the same time she began her musicological training at Columbia University. When her M.A. was awarded in 1938 she left The New York Public Library for a year of musicological study at the University of Munich. In 1939 she became instructor of music history and music librarian at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. She continued her musicological studies at Yale, earning a doctorate in musicology in 1948. Her dissertation was a transcription and commentary of the fifteenth-century carol manuscript, British Museum Add. Ms. 5665.

Miller left Oberlin in 1945 to return to New York City where she was Acting Chief of the Music Division of The New York Public Library. In 1946 she succeeded Richard Angell as Music Librarian and instructor of music bibliography at Columbia University. In 1951 she went to the 58th Street Music Library where she was First Assistant to Gladys Chamberlain until 1955 when she succeeded her as Librarian, retiring in 1965. From 1957 she taught a highly-respected course in music librarianship at Columbia.

Catharine Miller was the first American music librarian to hold degrees in both library science and musicology. Assisting those unequipped to cope with music in a library was one of her professional interests. During 1950 and 1951 she and Anna Harriet Heyer tried to compile a handbook for librarians concerned with music, but unfortunately the distance between Texas and New York defeated them. Miller did compile a typescript bibliography of the materials which she felt should be in a music library. She wrote the chapter on "Binding and circulation" for the Music Library Association's *Manual of Music Librarianship* (1966) and served on the readers' committee during the final stages of that volume's manuscript preparation.

It was her penchant for helping young, inexperienced music librar-

ians that first brought me together with Mrs. Miller. As she must have dozens of times, she patiently explained some rudimentary techniques of music librarianship to me, a class of one, in the midst of an informal MLA reception. I still remember her points, presented in a most careful, thorough fashion.

Miller was a member of the American Musicological Society, the Music Library Association, and the International Association of Music Libraries. In addition to the chapter in the *MLA Manual* she published an account of the Music Division's use of thematic incipits on catalogue cards (*Library Journal*, 1 June 1946), a summary of the 1946 MLA meetings in Washington, D.C. (*Music Journal*, May–June 1946), a description of "Phonograph records in U.S. public libraries" (*Fontes artis musicae*, 1956) and put together a special music issue of *Music Journal* (1 November 1951). She was the special advisor on music books for *Library Journal* from 1945 until her retirement. Miller died in New York City on 6 June 1966. A citation from MLA was presented posthumously during the national meeting in New York, July 1966. There are photographs of her in the *Music Journal* article and in *Notes* (June 1981).

In a valedictory which appeared in Lincoln Center programs about the time the Music Library was closed in preparation for its relocation in the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts, Irving Kolodin lauded the three women who, over the forty one years of its existence, built an "adjunct to a general 'branch' into a world-famous repository of fifty-thousand pieces." For critic Robert Sabin they converted "an inert collection of scores into an active part of New York's musical life."⁵¹

These accolades are but samples of many which have been directed to the libraries of all the pioneers described above. Each excelled at his or her task. For much of their careers they were solitary laborers, isolated from one another, unaffiliated except within the American Library Association, innocent of a professional literature. Their work contributed significantly to the development of America's music libraries.

⁵¹Robert Sabin, "Music Library is educational center," *Musical America* 67 (September 1947): 41. There is a more personal tribute from George Louis Mayer who succeeded Catharine Miller in 1965. Referring to Chamberlain and Miller "I worked with (and for) both of these ladies and was trained by them, and feel that I've been a good music librarian because of them and their standards and ideals. I've done my best not to let them down. And I have trained many music librarians here, some of whom are still here and others who have gone on elsewhere, who probably don't realize that they too are doing their job in the way they do it because of Dorothy Lawton, Gladys Chamberlain, and Catharine Miller." George Louis Mayer to author, 20 June 1985.