

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

CITY LIBRARIAN'S ANNUAL REPORT - FISCAL 1970/1971

While the dramatic aspects of library service for the past fiscal year center upon the last four months with the opening of the new central library, the more normal aspect this year as in past years is rooted in those routines and services which have been thrown into relief since the move to the present facility. The overall statistical picture as revealed by work in the Circulation Department will be dealt with first, followed by a survey of work in the public service areas of the library which give substance to the statistics. A presentation of the year's work in Technical Services will complete this report.

THE CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

Circulation for the system during the year amounted to 485,063 books and other printed materials and 8,507 audio-visual items. This represents a decline in total circulation from the previous year of 9,529 which is less than 2%. Weighted against this slight loss is the fact of the shutdown of the Central Library for the move in December, the damaged circulation in November as a result of changing plans for removal from the old building, and the fact that the Library has been unable to circulate magazine back issues during the first four months in the new building because of failure of the supplier to complete his installation of the compact storage shelving. Of greater concern than the statistical picture for the circulation for the system, which would be moderately good were it not for the difficulties attendant upon the move to new quarters, is the circulation pattern exhibited by the Extension Division which has sustained an 18% loss compared with last year.

There has been a marked increase again this year in the number of overdue notices sent by the Library. The Circulation Department processed 13,779 notices this year compared with slightly more than 8,500 in 1969/1970, a whopping 61%

increase which compares with a jump of approximately 33% last year and an increase of 14-1/2% the previous year. The increases cannot be explained other than by the theory that the public has grown accustomed to the overdue penalty and accepts the charge not as a fine but as a kind of rental fee. This is undesirable on two counts: it increases the work of the Circulation Department, and it depresses the circulation of the volumes kept overdue, thereby aggravating an undesirable condition caused in the first instance by a book stock inadequate to meet the needs of the community.

The Rolling Prairie Library System initiated a practice, in conformity with State policy, of compensating member libraries in kind for excessive use by borrowers from other libraries in the system. In connection with this practice, the Library has started keeping statistics on use by borrowers from other Rolling Prairie System libraries. From December 8, when the practice began, through April 30 (keeping in mind the three weeks closed for moving) the number of items circulated to card holders from other libraries was eight thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight. In addition, the Rolling Prairie Library itself borrowed, through Inter-Library Loan, fifteen hundred and fifty-two items, making a total of ten thousand two hundred and ninety items lent by the library in slightly more than four months to patrons registered with other libraries.

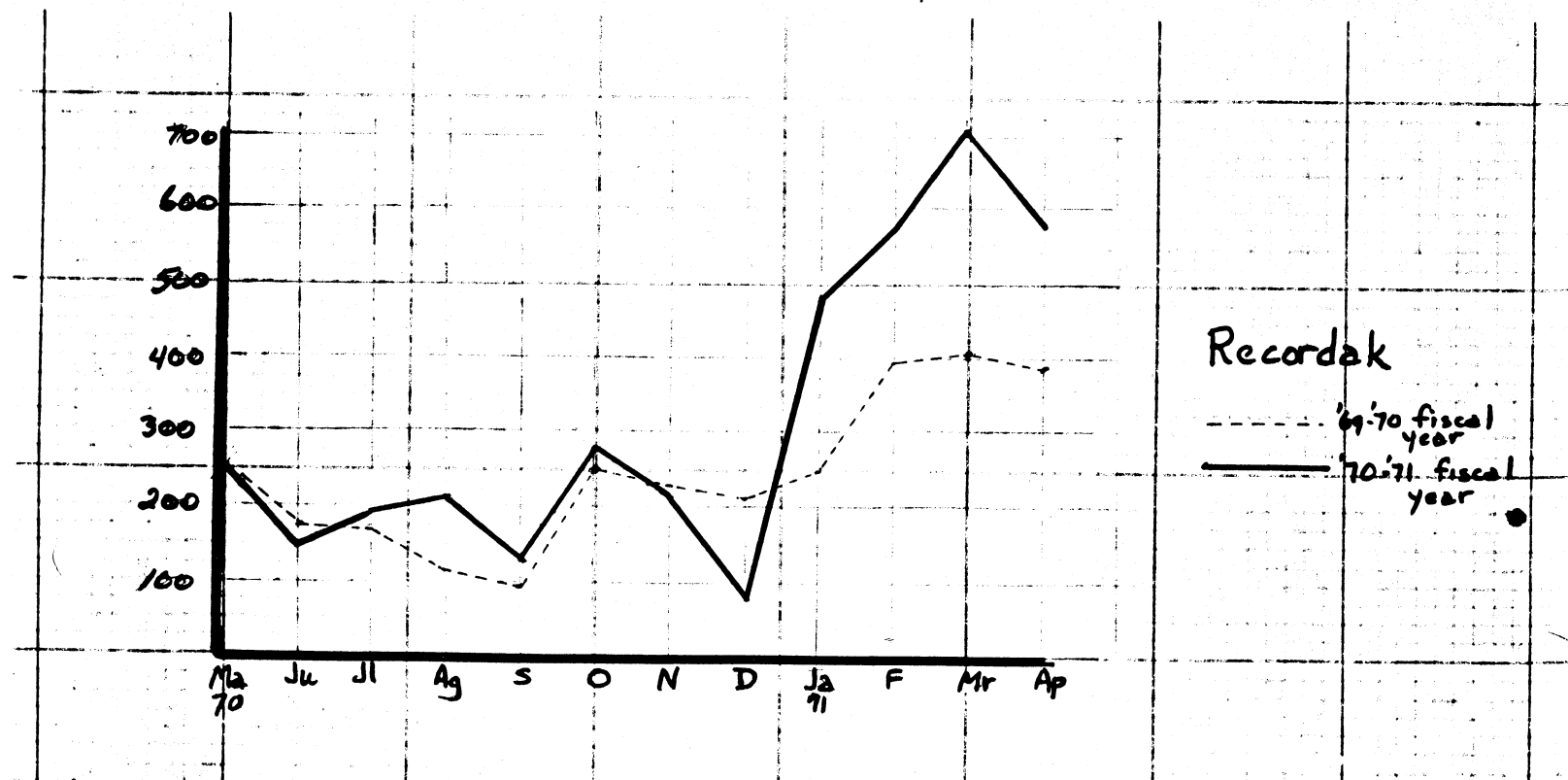
The Library has 29,092 registered borrowers, an increase of more than 1000.

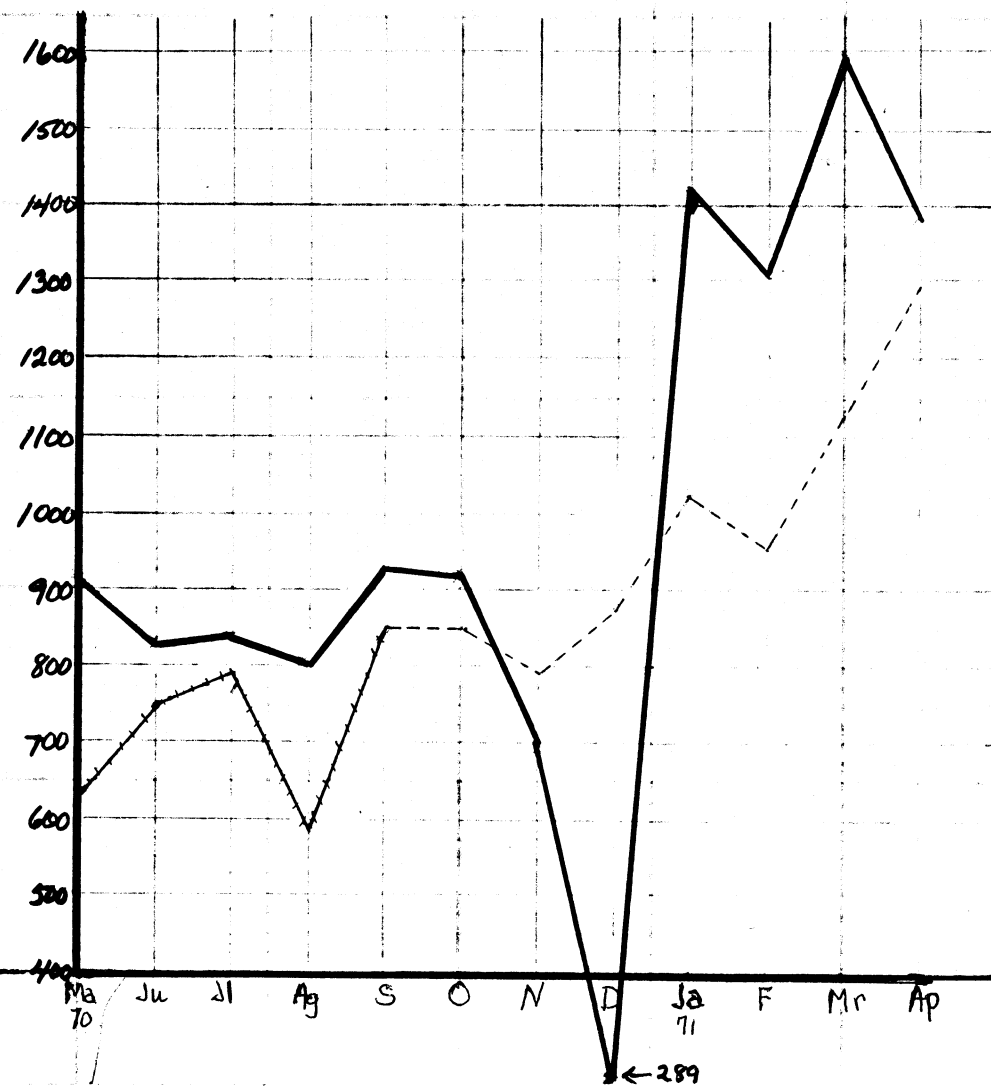
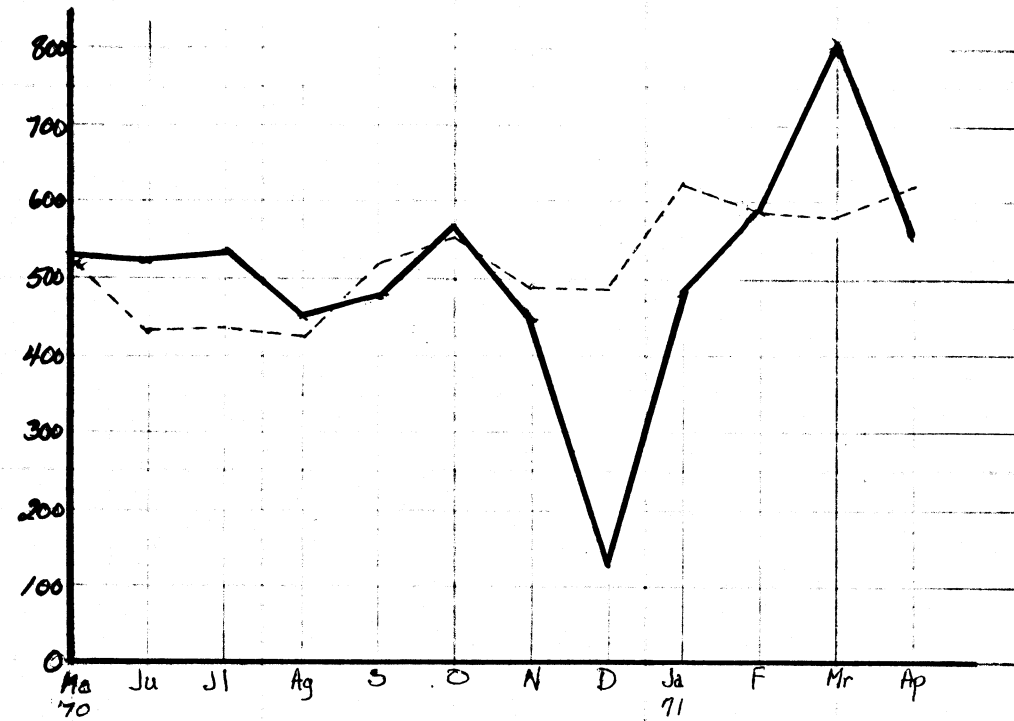
CENTRAL ADULT SERVICES

Miss Meyer became Supervisor of Adult Services in August, filling a position which had been vacant since the resignation of Miss Jones in June, 1968. Miss Meyer's principal concern during the period immediately following her appointment was the direct supervision of staff in the Reference and Home Reading Departments, both of which were without Heads at that time.

In addition to the readers' guidance, reference activities, and other staff assistance to adult readers in the Reference and Home Reading Departments, Adult Services is responsible for coordination of book selection, collection maintenance, preparation of readers' aids, development of public programming for adults, etc. One measure of Adult Services - and one which receives relatively little attention - is the library service extended to the community through telephone. The library during the past year received 10,386 telephone calls, most of which were concerned with direct service to a waiting patron. Another measure of public service for which precise statistics are not available, but of which we have been very conscious since moving to the new Library, is in-building traffic. It is my estimate that more in-building use of facilities has increased close to 500% since the new building opened.

The Reference Department's activity reached an all-time high during the present year, answering 6,135 reference questions, extending floor help to 12,066 patrons, offering reading guidance to 213 patrons, and assisting in 3,833 requests for use of microfilms. Below are graphs indicating the levels and distribution of reference services compared with the previous year.



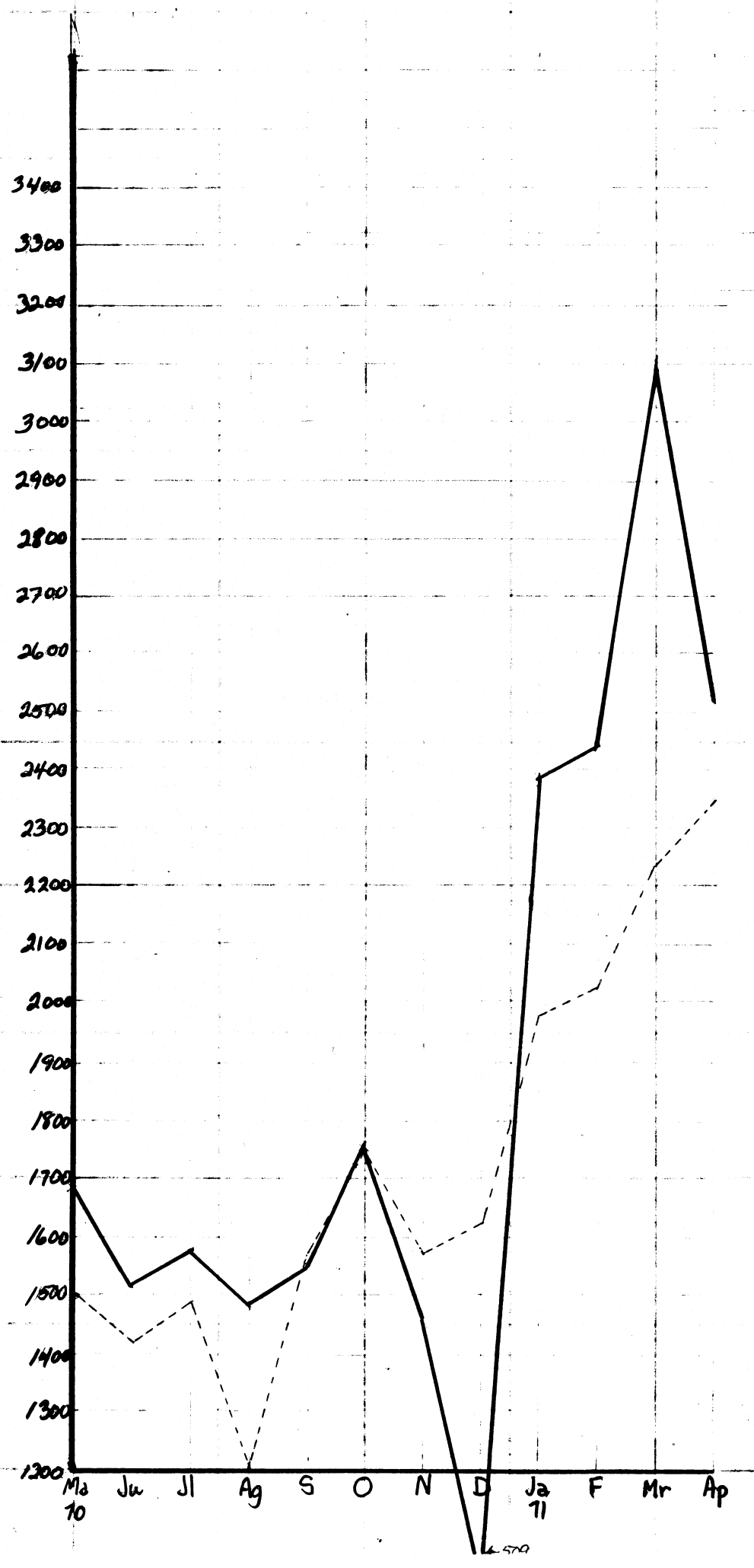


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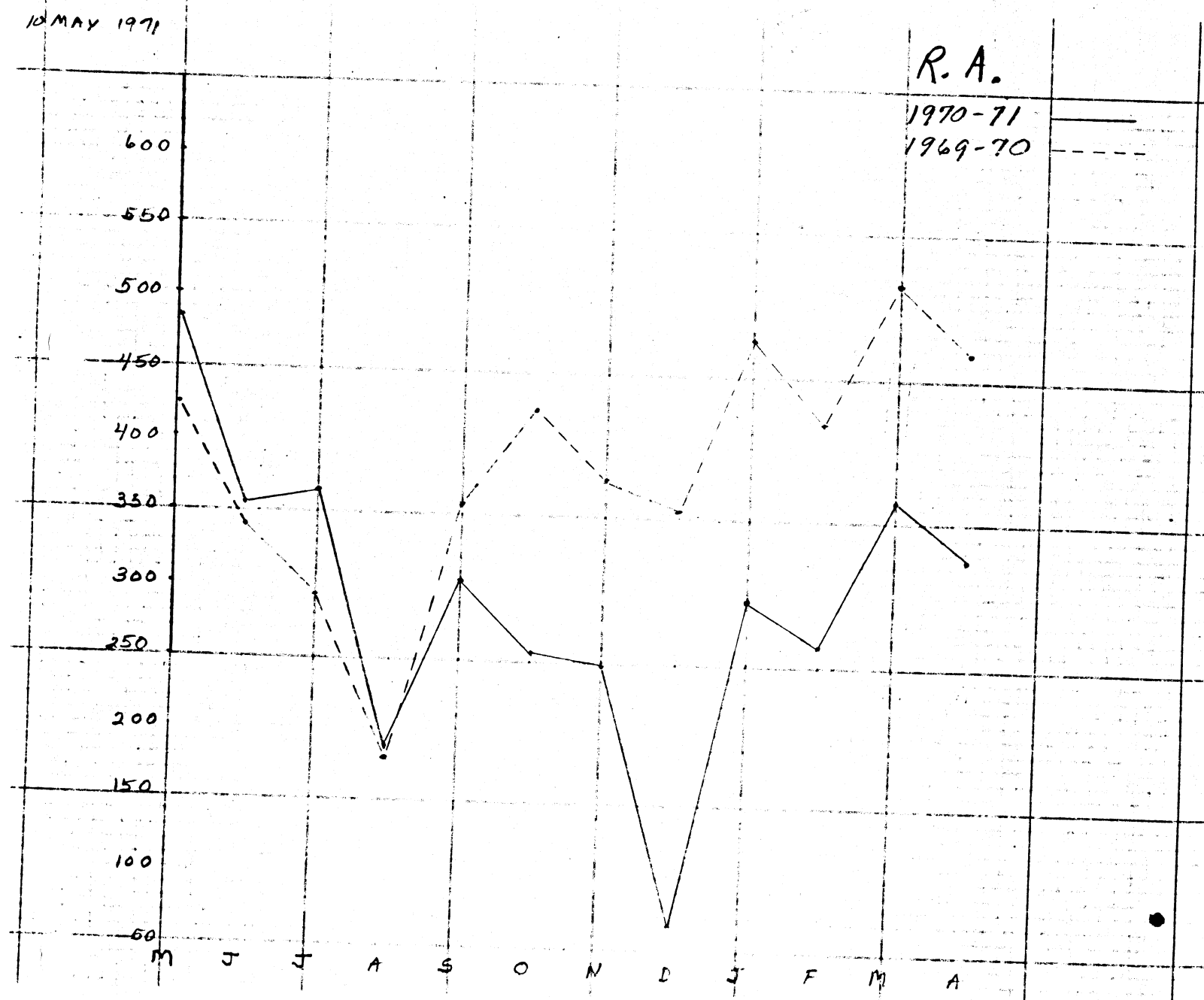
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Total
Reference
Activity

--- '69-'70 fiscal year
— '70-'71 fiscal year

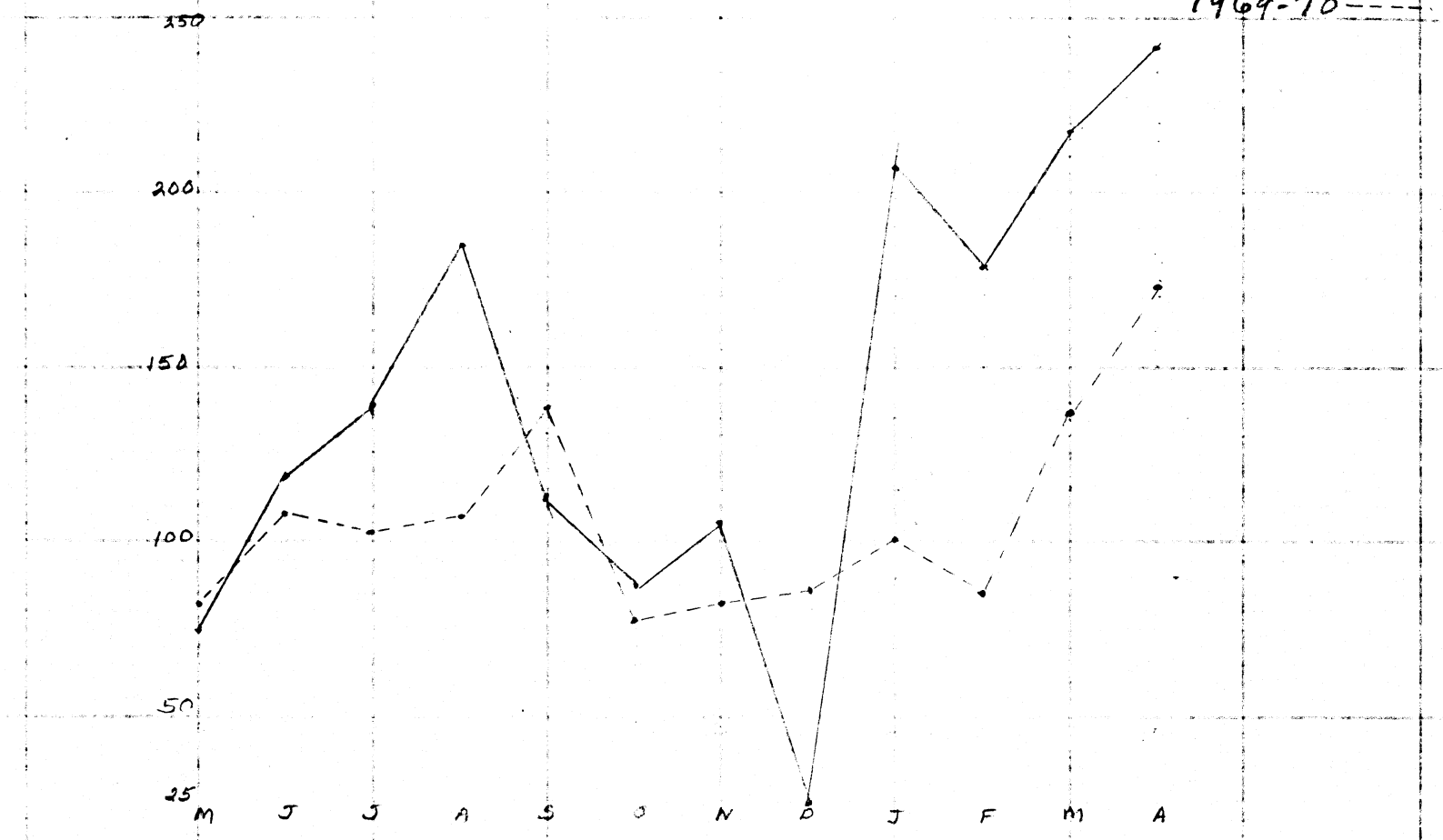


Circulation in the Home Reading Department increased during the last year to 192,725 compared with 165,494 during the previous year. Staff assistance to patrons was extended on 14,431 occasions, an increase of 4,000 over fiscal 1969/70. These statistics become even more significant in view of the fact that the department headship has been vacant since Mr. Betty Resigned to return to school in August.

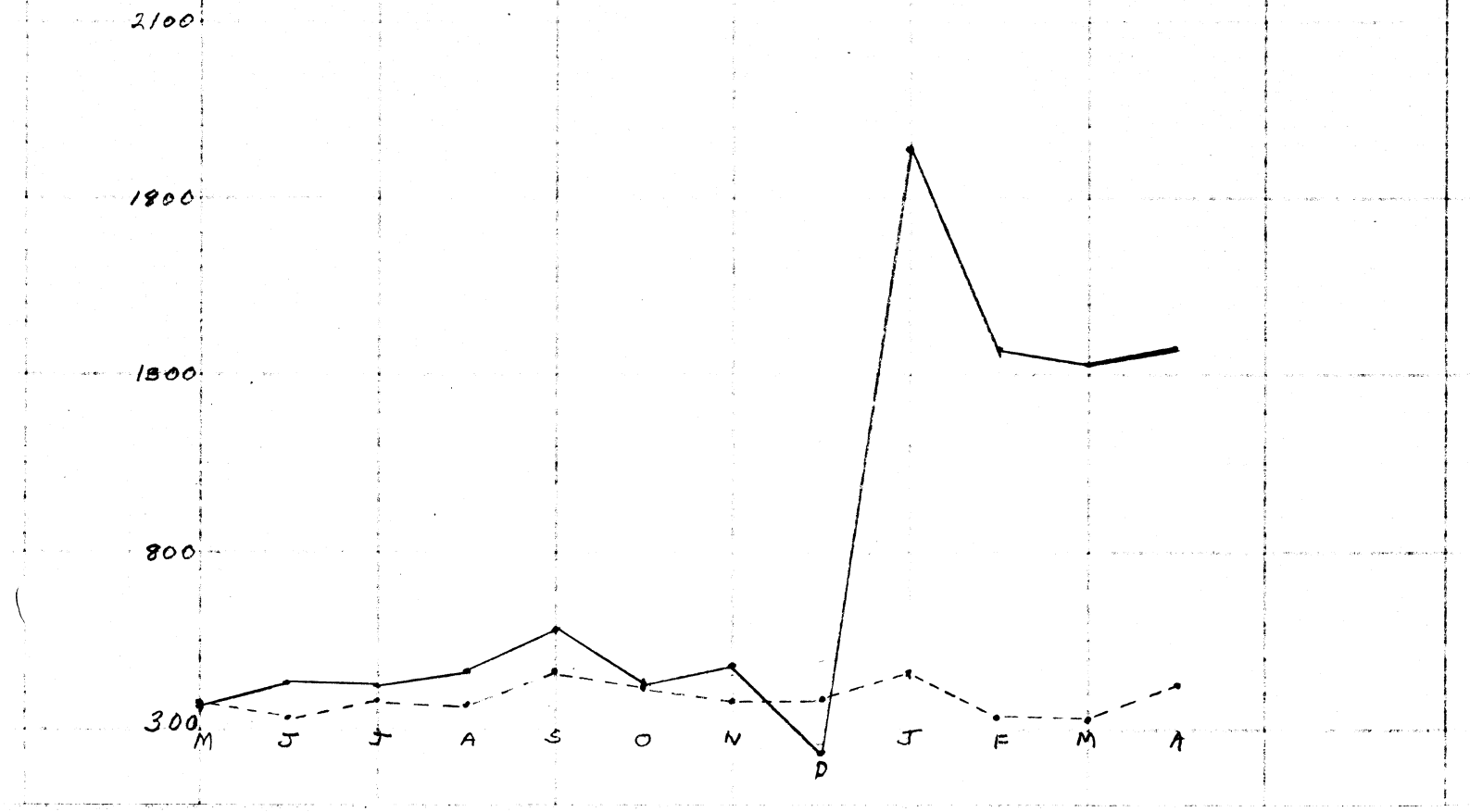


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DIR. INFORM.
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The Young Adult collection, now housed in one of the most attractive and accessible locations in the new library, is especially compatible with casual browsing and lounging. The High School set are quickly learning that this is their special recreational reading area.

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

Under the direction of Mrs. Anderson who assumed her duties at the end of August, the Library has begun the task of redeveloping the children's program in the Main Library. During the first months of her employment, she was occupied of course with the task of gaining familiarity with the juvenile collections and the procedures and routines of the Library.

She has since initiated a program of collection evaluation and development. This is a particularly critical function in view of the history of the Children's collections. Formerly the needs of the department were partly met by temporary assignment to the Children's Department of surplus or inappropriate bookstock from the Youth collection or the Extension Division. In line with present practice which emphasizes for control purposes the integrity of the individual collections, these temporary collections are either being returned to the holding agency or permanently transferred.

Class visits from the schools have continued this year and have increased since the opening of the new building. Classes from St. Patrick's have been visiting the Library for a number of years. Currently there have been eleven visits each month. In addition, visits from other Decatur schools have been averaging about two a day since January. During class visits there is a tour of the Children's Department, a story unless the teacher prefers otherwise, and an opportunity to choose books. Class visits provide an opportunity for the children to face an unfamiliar situation in the company of their friends. For many it is a first trip to the Library. In addition to class visits, there have been a number of scout groups from Decatur and outlying areas.

Among the increased service program of the Children's Department have been an increase in hours of service, with the Department now open two nights a week. A pre-school story hour program was held in February and March. Because of the popularity of the program and the need to limit attendance, two sessions - one morning and one afternoon - were held each week. Attendance was restricted to ages 4-6 and both sessions were filled to assigned capacity of thirty participants. A story hour for school age children was initiated in March, open to ages 6-13. Attendance has been averaging from 15 to 20 children although on occasion visiting scout groups have increased attendance to 40. There are no registration requirements or attendance limits for this program.

Circulation for the Children's Department was 101,185 compared with 90,319 during the previous year. Staff assistance to patrons rose from 7,188 in fiscal 1969/70 to 9,209 during 1970/71.

EXTENSION SERVICES

The Extension Division has suffered a great loss in patronage during the past year. Bookmobile service has declined with other aspects of service. Particularly serious is the decline in juvenile circulation with its implications for the future, especially in juvenile non-fiction. One bookmobile juvenile non-fiction has suffered a 64% decrease over the previous year; on the other bookmobile there has been a 70% decrease in juvenile non-fiction. This imbalance between fiction and non-fiction circulation is also apparent in the other collections of the Bookmobiles and in Evans. A healthy circulation pattern should show somewhat of a preponderance in circulation of non-fiction. In the central Home Reading Department, approximately 53% of circulation is adult; on Bookmobile I, for example, the circulation of non-fiction is approximately 18%.

The problem lies in the fact that the Extension Division is without trained professional guidance combined in the case of one bookmobile with high staff turnover.

The other bookmobile lost its trained assistant last August. The Extension Division is currently on the horns of a dilemma. With its limited program it cannot justify the salary of a trained professional supervisor with the necessary book knowledge and technical know-how, while the lack of such a supervisor leads inevitably to worsening of the present situation. It would indeed be difficult to find a person adequate to the challenge who would be agreeable to accepting such a limited program. It is my suggestion that the Board study the various options available with a view either to the development of a strongly augmented Extension program, or else to a curtailment of the present uneconomic program.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

For a period of nearly two years prior to the opening of the new library, the Technical Services Division of the library was involved in abnormal routine and under a tremendous pressure resulting from workloads developed in connection with the move to new quarters and from the fast-arriving deadline. Dill Branch had been closed and much of the book stock needed re-assignment and transfer. The change in scope of the Young Adult Department necessitated many transferrals of bookstock from that department. In order to avoid duplication of work and to plan for proper allocations of shelving for each department in new quarters, it was necessary to do as much transferring prior to the move as possible. At the same time, the decision to locate the Main Catalog in the basement with the principal collections entailed the creation of a limited or departmental type of public catalog indexing the first floor collections. The technical complexities of manufacturing a supplemental card index even for a limited or small collection are staggering. The control devices necessary, as well as the physical preparation of cards, the typing of subject headings, the organization of a system of cross-references, the many inconsistencies in previous work that require correction before one proceeds - all these matters have in the recent past so consumed the time and energies of the Technical Services staff that, frequently, the processing of new books was forced

to take second place. Now that the move is completed, the Technical Services Division has begun the return to normal operations. There still remain the system of cross-references for the new catalog to be completed, which will possibly take another year-and-a-half or two, but this cannot be approached on a crash basis; and it represents work designed to improve the useability of the catalog, but partial incompleteness of which will not hamstring the use of the collections. The division is now able to return to the cataloging of new materials, the re-classification of areas where inconsistencies have developed over the years, to desirable refinement in classification, to the conversion of subject headings to headings authorized by the Library of Congress and used by them on their printed catalog cards, upon which this library depends and from proof sheets of which we adapt cards for use in this library.

I should take note at this point of the retirement of Carola White, Chief Catalog Clerk, who served the Library loyally and to good purpose in a number of positions for forty-five years. Miss White for a long period of time when the division was without a professional supervisor assumed the mantle of this responsibility, and I am much indebted to her for willing industry on behalf of the Library and for her cheerful acceptance of a burgeoning and, in time, overpowering workload.

Appended herewith is a tabular presentation of production in Technical Services for each month of fiscal 1970/71.

TECHNICAL SERVICES
ACTIVITIES BY MONTHS

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	Total
New books cat. 1970-71	660	860	863	860	641	500	399	125	567	689	968	1020	8152
New books cat. 1969-70	615	430	813	790	545	711	717	427	484	693	692	678	7595
New titles cat. 1970-71	278	401	465	468	313	202	180	62	310	406	478	382	3945
New titles cat. 1969-70	223	185	301	207	188	241	294	188	193	279	271	288	2858
Microfilm cat. 1970-71	7	30	6	5	9	9	7	0	18	14	10	11	126
Microfilm cat. 1969-70	0	8	6	10	333	9	7	6	6	6	9	9	409
Records cat. (Phono) 1970-71	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	6
Records cat. (Phono) 1969-70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Books withdrawn 1970-71	226	162	803	415	120	466	785	136	128	37	12	218	3508
Books withdrawn 1969-70	480	1010	1220	394	758	516	244	943	228	170	341	209	6513
Records withdrawn (Phono) 1970-71	0	0	0	0	0	3	322	0	0	0	0	0	325
Records withdrawn (Phono) 1969-70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Books recat. 1970-71	121	67	26	20	221	64	115	17	36	44	122	135	988
Books recat. 1969-70	14	5	4	48	214	146	230	186	146	132	72	84	1281
Records recat. (Phono) 1970-71	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	0	0	46
Records recat. (Phono) 1969-70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Books trans. 1970-71	189	206	313	230	330	362	313	86	266	44	488	712	3539
Books trans. 1969-70	99	38	334	137	461	111	95	74	42	69	57	140	1657
Records trans. (Phono) 1970-71	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	20
Records trans. (Phono) 1969-70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Books mended 1970-71	645	467	298	459	376	362	362	40	164	314	417	671	4575
Books mended 1969-70	444	212	264	410	420	375	234	527	278	470	526	785	4945
Vols. bound 1970-71	117	0	0	215	0	0	123	0	0	214	26	639	1334
Vols. bound 1969-70	83	91	0	0	46	0	72	79	13	0	135	0	519
Books received 1970-71	590	440	612	451	542	538	441	249	525	307	2085	978	7758
Books received 1969-70	408	478	650	477	420	924	649	478	583	744	615	568	6994
Microfilm received 1970-71	27	10	6	5	9	9	7	0	18	14	10	11	126
Microfilm received 1969-70	348	8	7	9	5	8	7	6	6	6	9	9	428
Records rec'd (Phono) 1970-71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	5
Records rec'd (Phono) 1969-70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pamphlets rec'd 1970-71	126	50	66	70	169	30	62	23	78	184	96	114	1068
Pamphlets rec'd 1969-70	81	81	101	160	301	89	144	82	102	84	234	254	1713
Gifts received 1970-71	2	6	6	1	5	6	3	6	4	7	3	5	54
Gifts received 1969-70	2	0	34	0	2	13	2	6	182	0	23	14	278

I would not want to conclude this report without calling attention to those individuals and organizations who have in a great variety of ways contributed to the Library and its program during the past year.

This year, as in the past, the Library is much indebted to the Friends of the Decatur Public Library, under the presidency of Mrs. Vernon Crow, for its support and its contribution to the Library's program. These contributions and the evidence of its support are manifold, but I would like specifically to cite the "Books Between Bites" book review program, the \$300.00 gift with which to purchase phonograph records, the New Library Pre-Opening reception, and the support of the Friends for the bond referendum.

On behalf of the Library, I would like to thank those organizations who have adopted the policy of memorializing deceased members by placing a memorial book in the library. The Library is proud to be associated with the Drug Advisory Council in the control and dissemination of information on drugs and drug abuse.

The Library recognizes the important work being done by the Decatur Area Arts Council and the relationship this work has to goals of the public library. It offers its thanks for the Council's gifts and proffered cooperative projects which it hopes better to avail itself of in the future.

Speaking personally, I wish to express my thanks to the Board for its cordial presence and helpful cooperation and work during the past year. I have also accepted many compliments during the year on library services and I would be remiss if I did not record here that these salutes rightfully belong to the staff for their loyal and conscientious dedication to the public service.

Finally, I must acknowledge the interest and friendly cooperation the Library and Staff have received from our colleagues in city government.