



## **My Father Was a Tailor**



# **My Father Was a Tailor**

Edward A. D'Allesandro

MSL Academic Endeavors  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

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# Dedication

*Dedicated to the memory of my parents Rocco D'Alessandro and Maria Isabella Romanelli D'Alessandro who were not only the light of my life but also the salt of the earth.*



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# Preface

I am the fifth son of a fifth son. My father was the fifth son of merchant Don Nicola D'Alessandro, of Laurenzana of the Province of Potenza, Basilicata, Italy, whose lineage according to family lore was traced back to Nicola di Pasquale of the Dukes of Pescolanciano. Father never made much of his genealogy. According to mother the Dukes of Pescolanciano were decorated for valor and held positions of dignity from ancient time. The family name was traced back to 1187 to ancestral migrations from Greece according to *The Dizzionario Storico Nobilare Italiano* by Crollolanza.

My parents were Italian Immigrants who came to America at the t-urn of the century. My father was a tailor. He was not a great or powerful man. He did not make his mark in the arts, business, politics, science, or any other glamorous field. He did not amass a great fortune or build a large estate to leave to his heirs. He was a modest man who learned his craft well in his youth, worked at it creatively and used it honorably to support and raise four sons who were able to realize the American dream because of the principles, values and the work ethic he passed on to them.

He lived a long and full life and died at the age of eighty-three. It seems fitting that I should finally in this year of our Lord 1996 take to the computer and, xii *My Father Was a Tailor* coincidentally in my eighty-third year, begin to record my father's story and my story as well in order that my progeny and members of my extended family will know from whence they have come. Finally, it is also fitting that father's descendants and others who may read this book be given the opportunity to share intimately in this personal remembrance of an immigrant father's permanent and ongoing impact on the lives of his American born sons, and particularly on my life and career in public service.

Edward A. D'Alessandro

# Acknowledgements

This book could not have been written without the help of a number of people who in various ways came through for me when I needed their support or help. I am indebted to my sons Edward and Paul D'Alessandro for encouraging me to continue writing at those times that my will to continue waned because the words were not flowing as they should and I was tempted to give up. I am also grateful to my son Paul for first rescuing my first draft when I had abandoned it as a lost cause because of its format and had it typed on a computer at his cost by a commercial firm, and then for his continuing advice and counsel as I wrote and rewrote the book's chapters over a period of approximately two and a half years. Many thanks go to Paul for the many hours he spent editing the manuscript as I was bringing it to a close. My son Edward gets the credit for seeing that I finally got a computer which made it possible for me to finish writing the book in proper form. In this connection, I must not forget David Miller my friend and fellow retiree at the Westlake Village Retirement Community in Westlake, Ohio who became my mentor and computer instructor and who on many occasions came to my rescue when I goofed as I composed. He served as backup in that capacity at those times when I was unable to reach either xiv My Father Was a Tailor Edward or Paul, who also bailed me out of many computer composition problems. I must not forget to thank Dr. Thomas Mann, Reference Librarian at the Library of Congress whose friendship and encouragement over the years also helped me to persevere in the writing of this book.

Last but not least, my appreciation goes to my niece Joanne Conyngham, to my nephew Robert D'Alessandro, and my sister-in-law Rita D'Alessandro for providing some of the photographs of my brothers Nick, Sol and Arthur, which grace some of the pages of this book.

My greatest debt is to my father Rocco D'Alessandro for the many hours he spent with me through my childhood and adult years passing on to me the family's history and for motivating me to remember it in order to pass it on to his progeny and others through this book.

The research that verifies and supports the reporting of my Cleveland Public Library experiences was done over a period of five years. During those five years I would travel from my home in Virginia to visit and spend Easter and Christmas vacations with my son Edward and his family in North Olmsted, Ohio. During those holiday periods, I would spend three or four days researching the files of the Archives of the Cleveland Public Library. There my research was made possible only because of the gracious arrangements made for me by Frances Clark of the Library's administrative staff and the personal help I received from Ann Olzewski the library's archivist, who each time I arrived made sure that the Library Board Minutes and other materials I required from the archives

were waiting for me on a book truck in a private study room. I am eternally grateful to those two gracious ladies and to Director Marilyn Gell Mason who authorized the assistance they gave me.

The portion of the book dealing with my career at the Library of Congress and my recollections of events thereof have been based on and supported by personal reports, diary type notes, memoranda, documents and publications that are part of the public record.

Edward A. D'Alessandro

Westlake, Ohio 44145

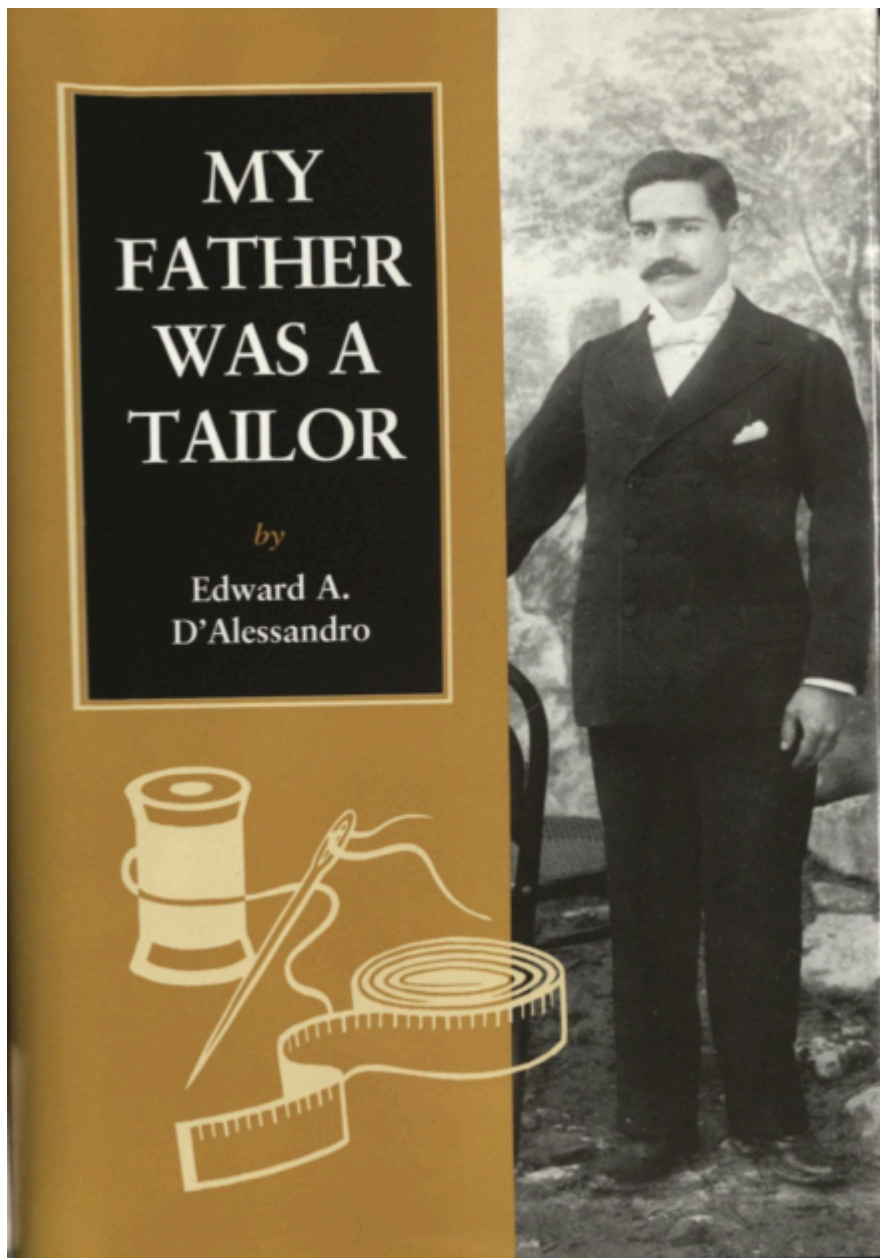
January 1, 1999



Needlepoint shield of family crest made by Marian D'Alessandro  
Photograph by Kenneth L. Guy

Cover

## Cover



# Chapter 1. My Father Was a Tailor

As I begin to write in this year of our Lord 1996, Father has been dead forty-one years. He died some time during the evening of November 10, 1955 at St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, after having suffered a heart attack. Ten days earlier, he had watched mother die suddenly of a heart attack at home on Halloween night. It had been a typical Halloween night. As fate would have it, i was there for dinner that evening and following dinner had joined mother handing out goodies to the youngsters until about nine o'clock. After the last youngster had come and been treated by mother, she announced, "It's time to do the dishes!" I suggested that she join father, who was watching TV in the living room, and that I would gladly do the dishes. As usual, she dismissed my suggestion, saying, "No! We will do the dishes together. I'll wash and you'll wipe." Having issued her orders, she washed and I wiped the dishes! It was around ten o'clock when we finally joined father. Within a short time, no more than about ten or fifteen minutes, mother began having difficulty breathing and gasping for breath! armed, I quickly telephoned my brother Nick, a physician whose medical offices were about ten minutes away and the priest from Saint Ignatius: Catholic Church, which was only five minutes away to come post-haste! Mother died in my arms as the priest was administering last rites and as my brother arrived. He had the heartbreaking task of pronouncing our mother dead. Throughout the traumatic moments of mother's passing, father sat on the couch across the room speechless, watching with an unforgettable expression on his face. I realized then that father's world and life had come to an end. Their life together had begun with their marriage in 1898 in the small town of their birth known as Laurenzana in the region now called Basilicata, located in southern Italy.

Father was born June 1, 1872, the fifth son of merchant Don Nicola D'Alessandro and Rosa D'Alessandro. Sisters Maria, Rosa, and Teresa followed to complete the family. Don Nicola early on had planned the careers of his sons. As youngsters, they were all to become apprentices in a trade or to be trained in some aspect of business in order that they might become partners in a combine of shops that he had planned. He began with Pietro, the first son. Pietro became the town cobbler and was set up in a shoe shop. Francesco, the second son, became a merchant like his father, responsible for the food store and for importing gourmet foods and wines, etc. Rosa, their very religious mother, foiled Don Nicola when it came to the third son's career choice. Rosa insisted and got her way with the choice of vocation for that son.



Uncle Francesco D'Alessandro



Uncle Don Giuseppe D'Alessandro,  
town priest





Birthplace of Rocco D'Alessandro and Maria Isabella Romanelli  
D'Alessandro parents of the author.



Uncle Gioacchino D'Alessandro,  
dry goods salesman, 1919



Uncle Pietro D'Alessandro,  
town cobbler

Giuseppe became the town priest. Don Nicola got back in stride in career planning for the remaining two sons. Gioacchino, number four son, was trained as a salesman and set up in the family dry goods store. When my father, Rocco, reached the age of ten, he was sent to the city of Naples where he was apprenticed to a master tailor, indentured as it were for a period of years. As a young apprentice in Naples, father was to spend eight intensive years in virtual servitude to the master tailor who among the master tailors of the city was renowned as a taskmaster and had the reputation for turning out exceptional young tailors. According to father, Il Mastro had one saving grace. He was a firm believer in observing the Sabbath. He believed that Sunday, the seventh day of the week, was made for rest, especially after having worked hard the other six days of the week! He also believed that religious and national holidays should be observed. He had one condition. The recreational part of each Sunday and holiday could not and must not start until he and his charges had attended Mass! Father used to say that he was sure that his mother had made certain that this particular Mastro had been chosen to train him in the art of tailoring for his penchant for properly observing the Sabbath! I can recall father telling me that, although Il Mastro worked him and his fellow apprentices from 12 to 14 hours a day from Monday through Saturday, he made every effort to see that the hours following church services were spent in some beneficial cultural, educational, or rewarding recreational activity. Father credits Il Mastro for introducing him and his fellow apprentices to the theater, to the opera, and to the fine arts. As a child, I now remember father regaling me with stories about seeing and hearing Enrico Caruso, Luisa Tetrazzini, and other opera personalities perform. He recalled seeing Queen Victoria of England and Frederick Wilhelm, Crown Prince of Germany when they made state visits to the city of Naples. Having come from a small town, father and his fellows in training made the most of all the cultural,

educational, recreational, and social experiences that came their way during their free time. As a result, the eight years spent in Naples had not only given them a trade, but also had broadened their horizons educationally, culturally, and socially. So it was that father returned to Laurenzana at the age of eighteen with the skills of a fine tailor and a sophistication and taste for things that a small town could not give him. As had been planned, his father established him in a shop to practice his trade, which father did as the dutiful son that he was.

In the year 1896, father, at the age of twenty-four, was betrothed to petite Maria Isabella Romanelli, who lived across the street from the D'Alessandro home at 45 Via Carlo Piscane. Maria Isabella was sixteen, five foot two, with dark brown eyes and beautiful, black wavy hair. Her father agreed to the betrothal on the condition that they wait two years to marry. He felt that his daughter was too young and insisted that she be eighteen before marrying. Shortly after Maria Isabella turned eighteen, she and father, then twenty-six, were married in the Chiesa San Rocco by Don Giuseppe D'Alessandro, father's brother who by now was the parish priest. I was told over the years that it was a large church wedding and the event of the year in Laurenzana.



Wedding photograph  
Maria Isabella Romanelli and Rocco D'Alessandro 1898



Grandpa Maria Saverio  
Romanelli, 1910



Author's oldest brother (Nick-Nicola Salvatore) as an infant, 1900

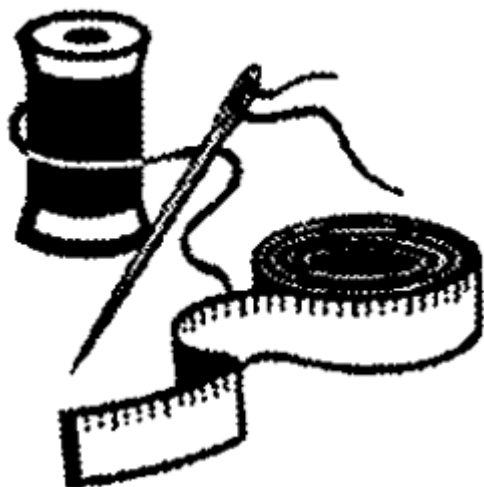
Mario Saverio Romanelli successful cabinet maker and craftsman being the perfectionist that he was, had spared neither time nor money in planning and orchestrating the marriage of his only” daughter. Having been left a widower, he had lavished all his love and attention on her. She had not wanted for anything. Through the years, she used to tell me that in her father’s home, she had never had to lift a finger doing housework or chores of any kind. In fact, she’d say, “I never had to do my own hair, everything was done for me by hired help!”

As to be expected, the Romanelli-D’Alessandro wedding, was celebrated lavishly and sumptuously and was the talk of the town for months thereafter. A home for the newly weds was provided by Don Nicola, in close proximity to both family homes, which was agreeable to all concerned, thus providing a happy start for the young couple. Joy reigned supreme in the extended family when on March 12, 1899, a son was born to Rocco and Maria Isabella. He was christened by his uncle, the priest, shortly after birth and named Nicola after his grandfather, Don Nicola, as custom and tradition required in Italian families. All went well for the young family until young Nicola, at six months became ill and died suddenly of a fatal case of pneumonia. The young D’Alessandro couple and the grandparents were devastated. The entire extended family mourned for months.

Nature, however, will not be denied. As expected, Maria Isabella became pregnant again and delivered a second son on May 24, 1900. The entire family looked upon this as God’s way of making things right for the young couple. This boy, now as the number one son, was also baptized Nicola. However, he was given a second or middle name, Salvatore, which means savior, in honor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

By this time, father was twenty-eight years old. He had given ten years of his life running the family tailor shop. Having heard and read about the wonderful opportunities in the United States of America, he decided that he must come to the land of opportunity to better himself and his young family. This did not set well with his father. Don Nicola was astonished and disappointed that one of his sons would want to desert the family and the family

business arrangement to go off on some wild goose chase, to a place where he had no assurance of the security and position he had at home.





## Chapter 2. Off to the New World

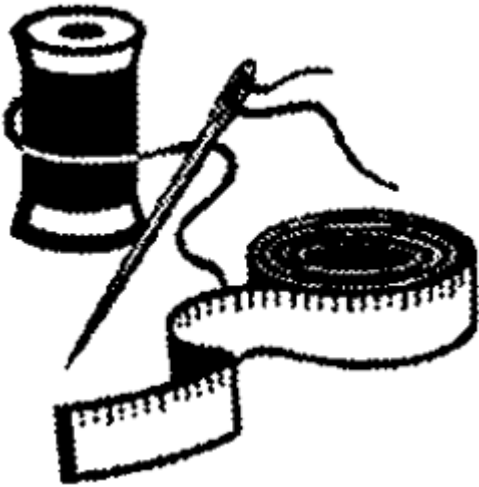
After much agonizing and soul searching and many family discussions, the decision to seek passage and emigration visas to the United States was made! When father sought parental blessing, He was informed that by leaving, he would be breaking up the family business arrangement, and that by doing so, he would forfeit his right to an inheritance. All he could expect would be enough money for his own living expenses and passage to America! Father was crushed and hurt by his father's position on the matter. The fact that his father was so vindictive as to refuse to underwrite the cost of passage for his wife and son hurt the most! Nevertheless, early in November of 1900, father, age twenty-eight, left for America, leaving behind his wife and six month old Nicola, consoling his wife and himself with the thought that as a tailor, he would be able to earn and save enough money in the United States to be able to send for them in the not too distant future. Needless to say, father traveled steerage class on the ocean liner, as was usual for most emigrants in those days. As a child, I recall the stories he told of days spent in what he recalled as "the bottom of the ship," in crowded, fetid, quarters. He remembered being befriended by an Italian crew member, a steward who would occasionally rescue him from the foul smelling, steaming, airless bottom of the ship for short visits to the crew member's cabin where father would reciprocate by making clothing alterations or repairs, while enjoying a glass of the steward's wine and conversation of a comparably educated young man in healthier quarters.

On landing in America, father was processed through Ellis Island, along with the thousands of other immigrants from southern Europe, who were pouring through that facility at the time. He used to joke about his experiences with the personnel doing the processing of immigrants in that venerable institution at the time. In addition to having been trained as a tradesman for eight years in Naples, father, as the son of a well-to-do merchant had been privately educated and tutored by an uncle who had been the abbot of a monastery. It appears that some Ellis Island processors only spoke English, and not being used to dealing with some immigrants, who could not read or write, and could only speak the rough dialects of their native tongues, found it difficult to interpret or understand some of the foreign names. As a result, many names were changed arbitrarily and became the permanent names of such immigrants in the rush of processing. Some of the name changes were utterly ludicrous! When father was processed, the processor tried to change the last name to Alexander. Father objected and won permission to record his name correctly.

After having been processed out of Ellis Island, father went on to New York City hoping to find a job and a place to live until he could earn enough money to enable him to move on to Cleveland, Ohio where he hoped he might find a permanent home and establish a residence for himself, wife, and son. Father, in reminiscing about his New

York City experiences spoke about arriving there with the equivalent of about ten American dollars in his pocket and all of his remaining worldly goods in a large suitcase. While on board ship, the steward who had befriended him had given him written directions to a street known as Mott Street, where the steward had told him that he might find people from his home town. Father, in recounting the story of his arrival, often laughed at the picture he must have made as he walked down Mort Street. He felt people looking at him with amused looks, paying particular attention to his hat. He wondered what there was about his hat that might be the cause for amusement. He said that he had purchased the hat in Naples from a fine haberdashery. It was well made, expensive, and in the latest style, he thought at the time! He soon learned the cause, He also found that he also was very hungry. It was late morning, and he had not had anything to eat since the previous evening's meal. He would explain his sudden hunger at the time by saying that he happened to be passing a bakery at that moment and saw the tempting display of baked goods in the window. Upon entering the store, he discovered to his relief and pleasure, that the store proprietors were Italian and joy of joy were people who had migrated to America some twenty years before! They too had an amused look when they saw him walk into the store. The first thing the proprietor did after warmly greeting and shaking father's hand was to remove a piece of cardboard from father's hat band. It read, in capital letters, MOTT STREET! Father explained that the ship's steward had placed the card in his hat band thinking that it would help people to understand where father wanted to go, since he did not as yet speak English. Father had completely forgotten all about it, going on to say that he must have looked ridiculous to the residents of the street. Suffice it to say that father's newly found Italian bakery friends with typical Italian hospitality fed him the first baked goods that he was to eat in the United States of America, and as luck would have it, later that day, introduced him to another Italian family in the neighborhood who took in boarders. It was through the kindness of these new found friends that father was also fortunate enough to find work as a tailor in the Garment District the following week. Father never forgot the Lauria and D'Lirso families who had befriended him in New York City.

The fact that father had planned a short stay in New York City was wise, because he found the city's size intimidating and his work in the Garment District a stultifying experience. The shop he worked in was a piece work shop. Any one who has worked in such a shop will tell you that the object is to grind out as many pieces of clothing as quickly as possible, In such a situation, the object is production. The more pieces produced, the more money is made by the owner and the worker. Father, being the craftsman that he was, was not trained or suited to fit into such a situation for any length of time. So as soon as he had earned enough money to cover his train fare to Cleveland, and Off to the New World sufficient funds to provide him with a good stake to get him started there, he made plans to leave. Being a stickler for doing the right thing, he gave the appropriate, timely notice to his employer and to the Lauria and D'Urso families, who had been the first to welcome him to America, and who had found his first job for him and gave him his first home in this country. Father often said that he found the moment of leaving the members of those families as heart rending as the moment of his departure from his own family in Laurenzana.



## Chapter 3. Father Settles in Cleveland, Ohio

Father arrived in Cleveland in the spring of 1900. He was met at the old Union Station by Rocco Motto, who was related by marriage to Grandpa Romanelli, having married Grandpa's sister. He had migrated to Cleveland some fifteen years before and was well established. In fact, by this time, he had a successful business close by the Union Station. He had been able to acquire a small stand there, where he was doing a good business selling fruit, candy, pretzels, cigars, cigarettes, and pop, as soft drinks were called in those days. Signor Motto took father to his stand to rest and treated him to his first taste of coca cola, pretzels, and a cigar!

According to census figures, Cleveland at the time of father's arrival could only boast of a population of 3,0'00 Italians. The majority of them had settled in downtown Cleveland in and around lower Ontario, Central, Broadway, Woodland, and Orange streets and around the old Central Market House that sat like an island between Ontario and East 4th Streets. Since it was the first largest concentration of immigrants from Italy, the area was known as Big Italy. It was also known as the Hay Market District, since the old farmer's hay market had been located there at the western end of Central Avenue. The Gund Arena and Jacob's Field now cover much of the area and the entire area is now called Gateway.

After having rested and enjoyed his snack at the Motto stand at the depot, Signor Motto then took father to his home at 303 Race Street, located off Ontario street, which was not too far from the depot and virtually a hop, skip, and a jump from the old Central Market House. 303 Race Street was an address in a three story tenement building that housed twenty-seven Italian families, the majority of whom had come from Laurenzana, father's home town. It was a red brick building that had been built and was owned by the Newcomb Family some time before the turn of the century. When it was built, it was named the Newcomb Block after that family name. In later years, it became known as the Ginney Block, so dubbed by non-Italians, because the block housed families of Italian origin. There were five doorways in the front of the building with small vestibules that led to stairways leading to the two upper floors. Each of the building's front doorways had its own street address number, and each landing from the ground floor on up had a four room flat on either side of it. Each flat bore a number in numerical order from the ground floor on up through the third floor flats. 303 Race Street was the address that marked the second doorway from the west end of the building.

The Motto family lived in flat No.3 on the right side of the third floor landing of 303 Race Street. Father was taken in by the Motto's as a boarder. Father was happy to share one of the bedrooms with two of the family's older sons, sleeping on a couch that was made up as a bed each night. Father used to laugh when recalling his days with the

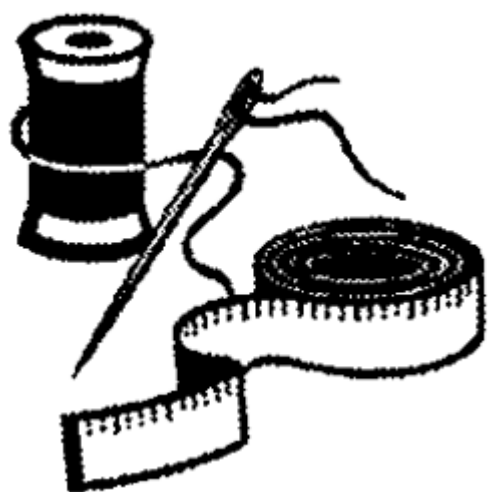
Motto brothers, who as young men like himself, built a friendship that lasted until death, a friendship that began in that little crowded bedroom where they shared every inch of space equally like brothers for several years.

It wasn't very long after settling in with the Motto's that father was fortunate enough to get a job with Mike Lavin, who owned and ran a fine custom tailoring shop located on the second floor of the Stone Building, situated on the south side of Euclid Avenue almost directly across from the Old Arcade. Mike Lavin was a big, jolly Irishman, who in addition to being a fine tailor with a large very lucrative business making clothes for a wealthy clientele, was also a devotee of boxing and regularly officiated as a referee in professional boxing matches. As a well known boxing official, his picture would appear in the newspapers from time to time officiating at the fights or posing with one local pugilist or another. I have pleasant memories of Mr. Lavin, because he never failed to give me a quarter whenever I made a delivery to the shop or did some errand for him. Father worked at home. My brothers and I had the job of picking up the materials for jackets that had been precut by a cutter in the shop as well as delivering the garments back to the shop for try on and then again when father finished the garments. Over the years, the delivery job was passed on from brother to brother as a matter of succession.

I can still see in my mind's eye father sitting cross legged on the large kitchen table that was located against one wall of our large kitchen, hunched over the material as he took painstaking stitch after stitch or sitting at the old fashioned Singer Sewing Machine as he would feed the material under the needle as it moved speedily up and down, powered only by the steady action of his feet on the treadle.

I can also recall how he used to carefully heat the heavy hand irons on the small two burner gas stove. I was always fascinated when I watched him deftly sprinkle a few droplets of water on the base of the irons and always, like magic, see the droplets sizzle and bounce off the irons. The irons always seemed to be the right temperature for pressing the finished garment. In father's case, the finished garment was always a suit coat of some kind. He was what they called a coat maker. In father's day, custom tailoring establishments had coat makers, pant makers, and vest makers. As one of Mike Lavin's coat makers, and because of the training in fine tailoring that he had received in Naples, father had become the number one tailor of the Lavin shop. This meant that he was always assigned the job of making special garments, such as tuxedo jackets and other formal wear, such as morning coats and what used to be known as Prince Albert coats in those days. Father, however, was always just as meticulous when making an ordinary suit coat as he was when making those more formal garments. Mike Lavin had some notable personalities as customers. The most notable that I know of was Adolph Menjou, that debonair and suave actor who was one of the few who managed to make the transition from silent films to talkies. Father, I was told, was always assigned the job of making Mr. Menjou's suit jackets and formal wear as well. Father worked for Mike Lavin faithfully year after year, often doing rush jobs that had to be finished for important customers in a couple of days for one reason or another. There were times when he would work around the clock for as many as two days in a row to finish a suit coat or formal jacket of some kind.

By 1905, the Motto family had been able to move out of the flat at 303 Race Street, because their little store at the Union Depot had prospered. They had been able to purchase a home in the East 40th and Superior Avenue area. At the time that they vacated the flat, father took it over and prepared it for the eventual arrival of my mother-to-be, Grandpa Romanelli, and young Nicolo, who was by then six years old.



## Chapter 4. Father and Mother Begin Life Anew in Cleveland

Grandpa Romanelli and young Nicola arrived in November of 1906. Father often spoke of his nervous anticipation as he awaited their arrival, how he had hoped and prayed that they would like how he had worked things out in the flat, and especially how they would adjust to living in four rooms on the third floor of a tenement that housed so many families in such close quarters in a strange city and country! He had not given much thought as to how he would be able to adjust to being a father to a son, a husband to a wife, and a son-in-law to a father-in-law he had not seen for six years!

According to father, grandpa Romanelli took charge of young Nicola, making it possible for father to begin what he referred to as his second courting of his bride of six years, spending virtually all of his non-working hours regaining the connubial relationship that had been suspended for the last six years! Nicola was enrolled in the first grade at the Eagle Elementary School, located fortunately only a few blocks away from the Block. I understand that he was a precocious youngster and learned the English language quickly, and by the end of his first year in school, had become a well adjusted student. Grandpa Romanelli saw to it that he got to and from school safely in the beginning. However, being a gregarious youngster, Nick, as he was now known in school, soon walked to school with his new school friends.

By the Fall of 1907, nature had taken its course with father and mother. On October 2, 1907, they were blessed with their first son to be born in the United States! The child was baptized Mario Saverio after grandpa Romanelli, following the custom in some Italian families, where a second son is named after the mother's father. This meant that Grandpa had another child to take charge of. He was the ideal baby-sitter. This was a great help to mother, who now for the first time found that housekeeping and the running of a household was entirely her responsibility. Here in America, she did not have the luxury of hired help to do for her as she had in Italy! By this time, father had studied hard and had passed the citizenship examination and had received his citizenship papers. Over the years, he would proudly say that it was the first high point in his life in America. He would add, "I accomplished two things, first I became an American and second, because I did so, my son Nicola became an American too!" He would explain that according to the law, if a father became a citizen before his child reached the age of 18, the child would automatically become a citizen too.

Father continued to work for the Mike Lavin Tailoring Shop, earning, I have been told, the magnificent sum of

ten dollars for an ordinary suit coat completed, and fifteen dollars for a formal jacket. Rent for the four room flat, I understand, was six dollars a month at that time. So, if father made at least one garment a week, the family could get by. At those times when he received material for two coats and completed them in a week, they lived a little better. Being as frugal as they were, they managed to pay the rent, keep enough food on the table, take care of other household expenses, and still put a little away in the bank!

On December 8, 1908, the family was increased by the birth of another son, Giuseppe, named after father's brother the priest, who alone maintained contact by mail. In later years, I learned that this second son to be born in the United States was precocious like Nick, and by the time he was two years old, was showing signs of a high degree of intelligence and physical prowess. Young Giuseppe was stricken with the Flu in the year 1912. He died in December of that year. My parents were distraught. The shock of losing two infant sons in the early years of their marriage had lasting effects on father and mother. Mother was pregnant with me at the time. I was only three months away from birth. I have often wondered whether the great grief and sense of her loss affected my development while she was carrying me. I do know that I did suffer from her over protection during my childhood, which I am sure was caused by the fear that she might lose me too! Father was affected in another way. He sank into a deep depression for a time. I understand that, for a period of about four years, he made a daily pilgrimage to Calvary Cemetery to visit his son's grave. Since father never owned an automobile, he made that long trip from downtown Cleveland to the cemetery by street car. Mother once told me that on one occasion father had not returned from the cemetery in a reasonable period of time. Fearing that something might have happened to him, and since he had been gone longer than usual, mother sent grandpa to look for him! Father was found, still grieving at the grave site.





Nick D'Alessandro, the author's oldest brother (extreme right) as member of Central High School vocal quartet, 1918



The author at about six months of age, 1913

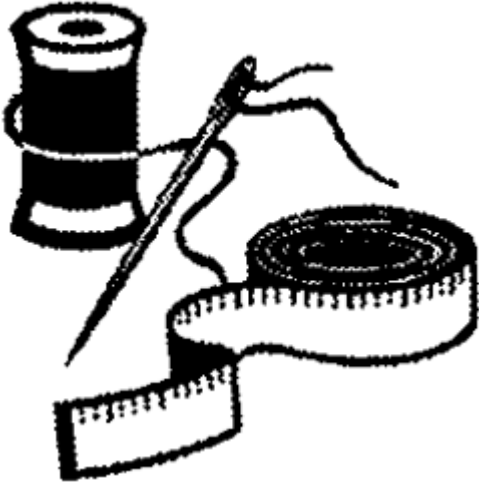
I was born on March 11, 1913. I was delivered by Angela Fiocco, the local midwife, at 2:00 A.M. on a cold Tuesday morning. In filling out my birth certificate she carefully noted that I was child number 5. My brother Nick, who was going on thirteen when I was born, told me in later years that father partially emerged from his deep depression on the day I was born. Nick told me that he firmly believed that my arrival helped my father get back on the road to normality.

Grandpa Romanelli continued to be our baby-sitter, guardian, and mentor. He took good care of us. Our four room flat was now quite crowded with three adults and three children. When things got hectic, Grandpa would hustle us out-of-doors for a walk or to visit his old friend, Rocco Lavigna, who had a small shoe shine shop near the Hay Market.

On other occasions, when Grandpa made his weekly visits to Hanratty's Saloon on Ontario Street with his shiny quart size pail for his ration of beer, he would take one or another of us with him after some cajoling. Hanratty's huge bar that seemed to stretch from one end of the room to the other with its shiny brass foot rail fascinated me because one end of the bar was invariably loaded with large platters of cold meats, breads, and rolls of every kind, accompanied by huge jars of pickles and pig's feet in brine. Those were the days when bar customers could buy a schooner of beer for a nickel and make themselves a free sandwich. The huge containers of pretzels were my favorites, because the bartender never failed to give me a hand full of pretzels when Grandpa paid for his pail of beer. Those visits were always short, but profitable as far as I was concerned!

When I was about four years old, I recall another memorable occasion on a cold February night, sometime after midnight, when my older brothers and I were awakened by Grandpa Romanelli. He informed us that mother was about to give birth and that father had gone to summon Angela Fiocco, the midwife who lived on Orange Avenue

some distance away. Needless to say, there was great excitement in the house that night. Grandpa was extremely nervous and worried for fear that father and the midwife would not get back in time, because neither father nor the midwife had an automobile. They were on foot! Fortunately, they returned in plenty of time. Brother Arthur, was born with the dawn of February 7, 1917.



## Chapter 5. Grandpa Dies and Father's Plan For Our Education Develops

The following year, we lost Grandpa Romanelli. He suffered a massive stroke in May of 1918. He was spared a long illness. He was seventy-six when he died. Mother lost a doting father. Father lost an understanding father-in-law and helper, and we children lost a guardian, mentor, and above all, a friend! Father, I believe, voiced Grandpa's best and most appreciative tribute when he said, "He was there for us whenever we needed him for any chore or errand. We shall miss him most for taking such good care of you boys. To him belongs much of the credit for how the four of you have turned out."

The family experienced a great lift in June of 1918 when brother Nick, graduated from Central High School. Mother and father were so proud, father especially so. Having come from an educated family in Italy, he was determined that his sons should also have all the advantages of an education. He was doubly proud, because Nick, by this time, had indicated that he also wanted to go on to college and to Medical school.

Father was a man proud of his heritage and of the family name. This pride also extended to given names. For him, Nicola, my older brother had become Nicholas or Nick more easily. For him, they were logical translations into the English language. He could see no similar logic in the change of Mario Saverio to Solly or Sol! Later, I, Eduardo, became Edward or Eddie or Ed, and younger brother Arturo, became Arthur or Art just as easily, because father recognized those names also as logical English translations. Mario Saverio became Solly when Grandpa enrolled him at school. Grandpa had always insisted on the use of Saverio for his namesake. As a result when asked what Saverio might be in English, he came up with Solly, I suspect because one of the Motto boys who also had been baptized Saverio was called Solly.



Nick D'Alessandro, pre-medical student, 1923

Father also had a strong sense of family values, ethics, honesty, honor, and morality. He was able to inculcate those precepts and mold them into each of us, not only by his own example, but also quite eloquently, sometimes by some properly chosen words or by a mere look that was more effective than words! He never preached or harangued or bullied us when he disciplined us. He also had a sense of humor and often used humor, resorting to funny stories when instructing us, often purposely incorporating malapropisms in his stories to convey a point.

His strong pride in our family name was exhibited, not only by his strong desire to protect and insure its correct spelling, as he had shown when being processed through Ellis Island, but also extended to his determination to

protect and insure that the family name not be dishonored in any way ever! His admonition to each of us early in life on that score was, "My father has passed on to me the D'Alessandro name unblemished and untainted by scandal of any kind. I am passing it on to you in the same way. It is your responsibility to make sure that the name is passed on to your children in that way also!"

As children, we spent our formative years in a tenement in that area in downtown Cleveland that was originally known as the "Hay Market" and "Big Italy," and finally "The Roaring Third," because by that time, it had become the "Third Ward" in the political redistricting of the city. It was dubbed "The Roaring Third," because it had become the high crime district of the city. Many of the original settlers had moved out of the area to the east and west sides of the city. A great number of the Italian families had moved out to the Murray Hill area, which was known as "Little Italy," to Collinwood and the West 69<sup>th</sup> and Detroit Street areas of the city. They had fled the old neighborhood, because bootleggers, prostitutes, toughs, and other unsavory characters had moved in.

Father had chosen to keep his family in the block on Race Street, because it was within walking distance of the source of his livelihood and because he felt certain that the block on Race Street was a safe island in the changing neighborhood. He also felt certain that we would be unaffected and untouched by the new element as long as we continued to be law abiding members of the community and minded our own business. He was proven right!

I can recall a time when I was about ten years old, we were visited by Signor Motto and hearing him say to my father, "Why do you continue living here? Are you not worried that your sons might be influenced by all this evil that surrounds them?" I have not forgotten my father's answer. He replied. "Bad fruit comes from a bad tree and good fruit comes from a good tree. I am not worried about how my children will turn out!"

In June of the year 1924, brother Nick, received his Bachelor of Science degree from John Carroll University and was accepted by St. Louis University School of Medicine. This was another high point in father's life. Like his father before him, he too had plans for the futures of his children! His father's goal had been to make tradesmen and or business men of his sons. Father's aim was to see that his sons received the best possible education in whatever field they might choose. When Nick decided that his field was to be Medicine, father, from that moment on not only encouraged Nick to work toward that goal, but also persuaded Mike Lavin to assign more of the formal tailoring work to him in order to increase his income so that he would be better able to help with the cost of medical school.

My brother Sol, who was seventeen by this time, having taken printing at East Technical High School, had just joined Walter Horn, an enterprising young man, who had just started a small shop in a rented room in the Erie Building, located at the corner of East Ninth and Prospect Avenue. This was the forerunner of what in later years became well known as the Horn & Norris Lithograph Company.

In that day, working teenagers, living at home, contributed to the family exchequer. Therefore, the making of Doctor Nick was to become a familiar affair! Nick of course worked during summer vacations. During his first two years of medical school, he worked as a playground instructor at the Eagle Elementary School Playground and during his last two years, got factory work, spending one summer in the steel mills in the Flats to increase his earnings to meet the increasing costs of medical school. Even I, although too young to work, because I was only eleven years old at the time, did my part. Since father and brother Sol, were busy working to support the family

and to provide the funds for Nick's tuition, books, lab fees, living expenses, etc., father assigned to me the job of letter writer. Yes, for the four years that Nick was away in St. Louis studying medicine, I wrote the weekly letters to him, serving as the family scribe!



## Chapter 6. The Family is Uprooted and Forced to Move from Race Street

In the Fall of 1927, father, along with all the other heads of the households in our tenement, received a notice from the rental office advising that our building was one of 1000 buildings in the area that had to be vacated and torn down to make way for the building of the new railroad tracks that were to be brought into the new Union Terminal that was being built at the south westerly quadrangle of the Public Square. The notice required that all tenants of the block would have to vacate the premises by January 1, 1928. Shock waves of grief and despair engulfed every family in the block. Father was now suddenly faced with the prospect of seeking and finding another place to live and to make plans to move as ordered by January 1 of the New Year! This was a traumatic turn of events for father. He now found himself and his family being uprooted arbitrarily from his first home in America. Fate stepped in when Philomena Lavigna, wife of Rocco Lavigna, grandpa Romanelli's good friend, proposed that father rent a six room upstairs suite in their new, recently purchased double house located at 3048 East 116th Street in the Buckeye Road area.

Father, at first, found it very difficult to reconcile himself to accepting the Lavigna offer to rent their upstairs suite for two reasons. First, because he was not sure that we would be able to absorb the rent increase. By that time, our monthly- rent in the block on Race Street had only been increased to a mere ten dollars. The Lavigna proposal required forty dollars a month! Father kept saying, "How on earth will we be able to manage an increase of thirty dollars?" Second, he worried about being so far from the source of his work. For years, he had become used to the convenience of being within walking distance of the shop. The distance from our home in the block to the shop was only a matter of minutes. Moving out to East 116 Street and Buckeye Road to him seemed to be at land's end. In addition, it would mean the added expense of street car fare to downtown Cleveland! Mother, on the other hand, was thrilled at the prospect of moving into a brand new home, with a bathroom, a luxury we did not have in the block. In those days, we tenement dwellers in the old Hay Market District were still regular users of the Public Bath House on Orange Street, which was a good twenty minute walk from home and, where for the great sum of five cents, we had our weekly shower, as was the custom at the time.



# THE BROWNELL METEOR ELECTION EXTRA

L. M. MARSHALL, *Principal*FRANCES S. WILLIAMS, *Faculty Advisor*CHAS. H. FOLWELL, *Printing Dept.*

VOL. 12

CLEVELAND, OHIO, OCTOBER 11, 1927

No. 1

## D'ALESSANDRO Elected

### Complete Returns

Official Returns, with all Precincts in, show the result of the election to be as follows:

#### For President

Eddie D'Alessandro ..... 295  
James Keirnan ..... 246

#### For Vice President

Nick Stoia ..... 271  
Sam Nader ..... 270

#### For Secretary

Myles Emfield ..... 297  
Peter Wisnesky ..... 243

#### ELECTION WEEK AT BROWNELL

One week of the first semester each year is given to activities concerning the election of the officers of Brownell's Student Council. Certainly no political parties in city or state elections could have put forth more effort than that shown by our student

#### THE POLITICAL RALLY

The red letter day of the Campaign came after several exciting days and put the final touches on one of Brownell's most brilliant election campaigns. The parties were both made up of such splendid students. It was really very difficult to say which presented the more outstanding program at the Rally held in the auditorium. We can never forget the enthusiasm, vim, and pep that those candidates put into their campaigns.

#### PLATFORMS

##### Builder's Platform:

- The Builders believe in building:
1. A clean, healthy Body.
  2. A strong Character.
  3. An agreeable Personality.

##### The Progressive Platform:

- Punctuality.  
Reliability.  
Obedience.  
Good English.  
Right Living.  
Excelsis.  
Scholarship.

#### ARE YOU AN AMERICAN?

Mr. Marshall says a true American is one who knows how to boss himself.

Begin now. Don't leave the job for your teacher or Student Council officers.

#### ALL TOGETHER NOW, FOR BROWNELL

The rousing Presidential Convention, Campaign and Election with all their thrills are over. Let us give the same good work and enthusiastic support to our new officers of the Student Council as Brownellites have given in the past. It's a big job and it requires the combined efforts of council and school to succeed.

#### GOOD NEWS

There will be no school Friday, November 4, as the Teachers Convention meets in Cleveland on that day.

Christmas Vacation begins at noon Friday, December 23, 1927. School opens again January 3, 1928. Only one week this year.

Election of officers in the Journalism Club will be held Wednesday. Watch for the results.

Brownell (Junior High School) Meteor "Election Extra" October 11, 1927

After some cajoling, mother was able to convince father. We moved to 3048 East 116th Street at the end of 1927, with father saying, "Let us pray that the Lord will help us come up with the rent increase." I too found the move difficult because I had been elected Student Council President at Brownell Junior High School in October 1927, a commitment I kept as a commuter student until the end of the school year and graduation at the end of January, 1928.



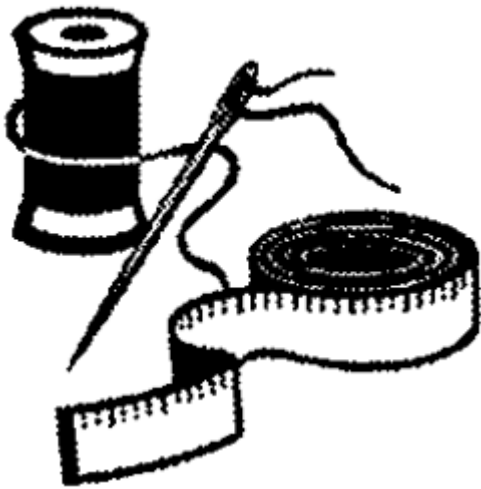
The author on the left and fellow pages, Rice Branch Library, 1930

The Lord did provide! A short time after I had graduated from Brownell Junior High School, I was chatting with Millie, one of the Lavigna daughters about my desire to find work as a page in a library, because I missed the part-time job I had at the Brownell School, which I had to give up when we moved out of the area. She contacted Theresa Frankino, who was Head of the Circulation Desk at the Harvey Rice Branch of the Cleveland Public Library at the time and set up an appointment for me to meet her. The branch library, located at 2820 East 116th Street was within walking distance of our new home, so I hoped and prayed that I would be able to get a job there, so that I would be able to help pay the rent! The Lord was with me! Miss Frankino' introduced me to Miss Charlotte Fairchild, the Branch Librarian, who must have been favorably impressed when she interviewed me. After I was able to show her that I could do the job shelving books speedily, she put me to the test. I was hired to work after school part-time at eighteen cents an hour, two cents more than I had earned at the Brownell Junior High School Library! We had agreed that I could work following classes at John Adams High School, from 3:30 to 9:30 P.M., Monday through Friday, and a full day on Saturdays. So it was with the Lord's help my earnings,

along with my brother Sol's earnings, helped father pay the rent and the family's expenses required by our new home.

Father soon became used to "living way out in the country" as he put it. He got used to riding the street car to pick up material from the shop and so continued to work for Mike Lavin without any problem or interruption.

Nick received his medical degree from St. Louis University School of Medicine in June of 1928 and passed the Ohio State Board Examination in July, making him a licensed Physician. This was a great milestone in our family and made both father and mother exceedingly happy and proud. At the same time, Nick had been accepted as an intern at the old St. John Hospital, located at West 79th and Detroit Avenue. Father had now been able to prove those neighbors wrong, who at the time that Nick had gone away to medical school, had predicted that father, as a poor tailor, would never be able to afford the expense of educating a medical doctor, that a tailor's needle could never make a Doctor of Medicine!



## Chapter 7. The Great Depression

Everything was going well and then suddenly, things fell apart! In October of 1929, panic struck Wall Street and the Great Depression gripped the country! Factories closed their doors, businesses went bankrupt, and no work was to be had. The Mike Lavin Tailoring Shop was forced to downsize its corps of tailors for lack of business. Father, however, was retained as the coat maker, along with a pant maker, a vest maker, and the chief cutter in the shop. This did not last very long, because by year's end, business was so poor, Mr. Lavin finally threw in the towel and closed shop. Father was devastated. He was out of work at the age of fifty-seven for the first time since he had become a tailor. There followed a frantic period of searching for work with the few custom tailoring shops in the Cleveland area that had not gone under as yet. Finally, in the summer of 1930, father was able to get sporadic work with Forchheimer's, a custom tailoring shop in the Old Arcade. This source of work also dried up as the year 1931 dawned. The few remaining shops in town were not hiring. Father was now totally and apparently permanently out of work.

The final blow came when some of the banks failed. The fact that father saw some humor even in that dire situation is evidenced by the fact that he always got a kick out of telling the story of an incident he witnessed during the course of a run on the good old solid and stable Society for Savings Bank at the time. When reminiscing about that trying time, he loved to tell, chuckling, all the time as he told the story, of the uneducated Italian laborer who was in line at the bank teller's window, and who said to the teller, "If you gotta, I no wanna! If you no gotta I wanna!" While not the best of English, it was an apt and eloquent way for the poor man to express his concern and what he wanted and did not want!

Up until this time, father had, as a naturalized citizen, been assimilated and had made a place for himself and his family in his adopted country. He had worked hard and was making his contribution to the United States of America as a law abiding and productive citizen of the nation. Like countless others, he was to become a victim of the Great Depression! Also, by 1929, brother Nick, had met and fallen in love with lovely Leona Henn, tall and stately in bearing, with a peaches and cream complexion and bobbed hair. Early in the year, they had eloped and were married at Belle Isle, Michigan. This came as quite a shock to my parents. Mother cried and fussed, because she had not been consulted or even advised of the wedding before hand. Father, on the other hand, was deeply hurt. This sort of thing did not happen in Italian families! Betrothals and marriages were a sacred family affair and not to be done in secret. This was considered an insult to the entire family. Having recently lost his means of livelihood, this became another blow to father's ego as the head of the household! He reasoned that brother Nick, who was still an intern at St. John Hospital and had been accepted as a resident at St. Ann Hospital for the next

year, could no longer be counted on to help with the family exchequer and his plans for helping Art and me to complete our educations. Father was proven wrong, because Nick was still able to continue as a helping partner with the family finances and later with the education of Arthur our youngest brother, which later also became a family project.

During the early 1930's, father got odd jobs with one shop after another until the year 1933 when he began to find that wherever he went for work, he found that he was being passed over because of his age! The work available was now being assigned to the younger tailors. He now found that he was no longer employable! He and mother were now going to become completely dependent on their sons for financial support!

The main responsibility of supporting the family rested on brother Sol, who was still living at home and working full time at the Horn & Norris Lithograph Company and on brother Nick. My smaller earnings from my after school library job supplemented Sol's full time take home pay and Nick's contributions. Although our incomes were small, the family managed to continue to survive sans any kind of dole as the economic depression heated up. When I graduated from John Adams High School in January 1931, as much as I had wanted to go on to college, I could not, because we could not afford it. I continued working at the Harvey Rice Branch Library. I asked for a full time work schedule, and fortunately Rosalie Brooker who had succeeded Charlotte Fairchild as the Branch Librarian obliged, and, as a result, my increased earnings, added to brother Sol's and brother Nick's contributions, made it a little easier to keep paying the increase in rent.

Unbeknownst to us, father, although out of work, still held on to his plan to see that brother Arthur and I were to have the opportunity to further our educations and become professionals. He realized that I was greatly disappointed and saddened because I had not been able to go right on to college right after high school. From the time of my high school graduation at the end of January 1931 until the Spring of 1933, he had quietly put away a portion of each pay check that I had given to him during that time for my college education.

Father had managed to save enough money to enable me to enroll at John Carroll University at least for my first year. I was not only surprised, but also thrilled to the core when father said to me, "Here, I believe, is enough money for you to at least start your first year at the University. I am hoping and praying that the Lord will bless us with the ability to come up with the rest of the money for you to complete your four years there." I was ecstatic, and lost no time in getting my application for admission in the mail to John Carroll University! I was accepted and began my four years of commuting to classes by street car in the Fall of 1933. As father had hoped and prayed, the Lord did bless us with the ability to continue to earn our way'. You see, father had been able, by his example, encouragement, and instruction, to pass on to us his work ethic. He often said, "You must work hard, do your best in all you undertake, and above all, you must earn your way." He would add, "Nothing comes from slothfulness!" He would always end such periods of advice by saying, 'bove all, always be honest and honorable in all you do!" With father's continuing encouragement, I was now working my way through college.



Sol D'Alessandro the author's brother, 1927



Marian Graves fiancée of Sol D'Alessandro, 1922





## Chapter 8. The Family Comes into Better Times

By the year 1934, more good things began to happen. Doctor Nick had been in a steadily growing practice since 1930. He and Leona had presented father and mother with their first grandchild, Joanne, who as the first girl in the family, was totally spoiled. Father and brother Nick were now finally completely reconciled and Nick was back in his position as the scion of the family! 1934 also saw brother Sol married to Marian Graves, a pretty young nurse he had met earlier while he was recuperating from an appendectomy at St. John Hospital. She was smart and efficient, with dark hair nicely bobbed and a warm smile. They had been married at St. Agnes Catholic Church, located at the corner of East 79th and Euclid Avenue with all the members of both families present. I had the honor of being “best man.” It was a beautiful wedding. The thing that impressed me about that wedding was its serenity and its music. To this day, I recall the beautiful strains of the Ave Maria as it was sung by a young and very handsome tenor, Joe Moribito. As he sang, a hush enveloped the church. I am not exaggerating when I say that I actually experienced goose bumps! I still feel those same goose bumps whenever I hear the Ave Maria!

I continued to work at the Harvey Rice Branch of the Cleveland Public Library. I had been promoted to Head Page, overseeing the work of three other pages, and was now earning twenty cents an hour! One day early in June of 1934, Miss Brooker received a telephone call from Mrs. Harry E. Beatley, who was in charge of the pages at the Main Library. She asked Miss Brooker to recommend one of her pages for promotion to work at the Main Library. Miss Brooker recommended me! On June 11, 1934, I was transferred to the Shelf Division at the Main Library to work for Mrs. Beatley with an increase of four cents an hour!

Upon my promotion to the Main Library, with father’s and my encouragement, brother Arthur, who had just graduated from John Adams High School, applied for and got my job at the Harvey Rice Branch Library and so also joined the family corps of workers. He too by now had decided to study medicine and had already applied and been accepted at John Carroll University. This too was all in line with father’s plan. He did not want Arthur to be held back as I was after graduating from high school. For economic reasons, I had been forced to lose almost three years before going on to college! Although we were still in the depths of the depression, the family exchequer had improved because of Doctor Nick’s increased contributions to the family coffers. Father figured that as the family financial controller, his frugal and wise use of the funds contributed to the family pool by the four of us should not only continue to support the paternal home, but also enable Arthur and I to pursue our educational goals!

Father’s plan worked! I graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree from John Carroll University on June 8, 1937, all the while working six hours each day after classes during the week and a full day on

weekends! In those four years, I had risen from the position of General Page to Head Page at the Main Library, going from twenty-four cents an hour to fifty cents an hour as the Head Page! At this point, I had won a partial scholarship at the old Western Reserve University Graduate School of Library Science and was waiting to matriculate there in September of 1937.

Arthur graduated from John Carroll University in June of 1938 as a Pre-Medical Student with a Bachelor of Science degree and had been accepted as a medical student at the Loyola University School of Medicine in Chicago, Illinois. During his four years in college, Arthur also continued to work as a library page. In 1936, he also was promoted and transferred from the Harvey Rice Branch Library to the Main Library as a General Page in the Shelf Division and worked under me as Head Page. In later years, while reminiscing about those days, we laughed about how he used to complain that, as his boss, I overworked him, always assigning him to the busiest divisions, places where he had to work harder than all the other pages. As his supervisor, I could not show favoritism in any way.

While at the Western Reserve University School of Library Science, I was promoted to Student Assistant in the Sociology Division of the Main Library where I began to feel the challenge, excitement, and thrill of doing reference and research work.

When granted my degree in Library Science, I received my first professional appointment in the Cleveland Public Library System. On July 1, 1938, I was appointed to the position of Junior Reference Assistant in the Sociology Division of the Main Library at the salary of \$1,380 a year. I was walking on clouds!

For father, this was another milestone in his master plan. He now had a doctor, a successful lithographer and a professional librarian in the family. The next and final step in his master plan was to see that Arthur reached his goal. The plan was that Nick, Sol and I would not only continue to support the family home but also help Arthur with his medical school expenses. He of course was expected to work during summer vacations to carry his share of his medical school financial requirements. Arthur went off to the Loyola School of Medicine in late August 1938 with the assurance that he had a secure financial base at home for the four years that he was to spend gaining his medical degree.

These were ominous times. By March of 1939, Adolph Hitler had begun his march in Europe. Czechoslovakia had been dismembered. His conquest of Europe had been initiated with the blitzkrieg of Poland in September of that year. World War II had begun and young people like Arthur and myself knew that it would not be long before the United States would be brought into it and that our future lives and careers would be affected! Arthur successfully completed his medical studies at Loyola, graduating in 1942. During his last two years at Loyola he had served as a medical extern at The Cook County General Hospital in Chicago where he gained valuable experience as a prelude to his internships that were to follow. In July of 1942, Arthur began his internship at St. Vincent Charity Hospital located at East 22nd and Cedar Avenue.



## Chapter 9. Brother Art and I Answer Uncle Sam's Call

In 1938, at the age of twenty-five, I had become the first male Assistant Head of a Branch Library in the history of the Cleveland Library System, at the Euclid 100th Branch. By 1941 at age of twenty-eight, I had been promoted to Branch Librarian, directing the work of a staff of sixteen people at one of Cleveland's Carnegie branch library buildings known as the Woodland Branch Library located at 5806 Woodland Avenue. In May of 1943 at the age of thirty, I left that position in the Cleveland Public Library for military service.

After initial processing at Camp Perry, Ohio, I was assigned to the I.IS Army Air Corps and sent with a group of recruits for nine weeks of basic training to Gulf Port, Mississippi. Again father and mother reacted differently to this turn of events. Mother faced with sons leaving for military service in wartime, cried and prayed. Father took it more calmly and philosophically, accepting it as something that had to be done.

Upon completion of basic training, I was sent to Drew Field, an Army Air Corps Training Base located near Tampa, Florida. I arrived there in August, 1943 and was placed in a casual company to await assignment to a class to be trained as a radio operator. During this period of waiting, like all trainees awaiting assignment of one kind or another, I pulled K.P., garbage, latrine and police the area details.

One, bright, sunny afternoon, while engaged in the edifying job of policing the area, I was brought face to face with what may be called an accident of fate. I met Master Sergeant Frank Zamparelli in the area that I was policing. I should explain that policing the area means picking up cigarette butts and trash!

Master Sergeant Zamparelli and I recognized each other immediately. He said, "Ed, when did you get here? Why are you picking up butts? When I left home, you were a professional librarian working at the Cleveland Public Library! Why have you been assigned to Drew Field?" I explained that I had arrived about a week ago, that I was waiting to enter one of the radio operator training classes for eventual duty, for overseas assignment. He told me that he was attached to the post's special service unit, that my arrival was fortuitous because Special Services was looking for someone with library training and experience to help catalog and process a collection of books stored in an empty barracks, awaiting the completion of a post library. He said that he would speak to Major Delano his superior officer about having me transferred to Special Services, that is, if I were interested! "Was I interested? Of course!" I jumped for joy at the chance to do what I was professionally trained to do! Within the matter of a week, I was transferred to Special Services!

By this time, brother Arthur had reported for duty as a medical officer at the officer reception center in Columbus,

Ohio for processing. He was then sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky for his basic training and assignment to an Army Medical Unit.



The author as an  
army buck private,  
Drew Field, Florida, 1943



Capt. Arthur D'Alessandro  
Commander, 67th Field Hospital,  
Europe, 1945



Capt. Arthur D'Alessandro, at right-center,  
operating in Normandy, August, 1944  
Courtesy of Press Association, Inc.



The author (second from right) as Drew Field Honor Guard at army ship launching, Tampa Shipyards, Florida, October 29, 1944

I, in the meantime, had been promoted to the exalted rank of Private First Class when transferred to Special Services to help get the new post library ready for opening by Christmas of 1943. From that point on, I worked with Hollis Warnock, a bright, young and very attractive civilian librarian. From the time we opened the library until December 1944, Hollis and I worked long hours, keeping the library open from 7:30 A.M. until 10:00 P.M. because it was so popular.

The fact that brother Arthur was now a medical officer and I was safely placed in an assignment that allowed me to practice my profession pleased both father and mother immensely. Father was especially proud. I recall brother Nick, who was now the letter writer for the family, writing to tell me that father was now boasting to all our neighbors about our special military assignments! Yes, it was now Nick's turn to be the family scribe, just like I had been while he was away at medical school. Nick wrote to Arthur and me during our World War II service years, even though he was busy conducting his medical practice and serving his country as well, as medical examiner for the local Draft Board! During the war years, we continued to cooperatively support our parents. Arthur and I did our share by arranging for monthly allotments from our army pay, which the LIS Army Paymaster mailed directly to our parents each month. Twenty-two dollars of my thirty three dollar monthly Private's pay" went home! Seven dollars was taken out for my Army Uncle Sam's Call 55 Insurance. This left four dollars a month for pocket money. This improved somewhat as my rank improved with the passage of time.

In the Spring of 1944, brother Arthur was shipped to England with a group of surgeons, destined for surgical units being formed for active service. On June 6, D-Day, Arthur found himself in one of the Medical Auxiliary Surgical Units on his way for the invasion of Normandy. These units were the fore runners of what later became famous as the Medical Auxiliary Surgical Hospitals or MASH outfits of the Korean War!

December of 1944, found the US Army in need of infantry replacements. In December of that year, Germany launched its last ditch offensive, which became known as the Battle of the Bulge. The United States was also beginning to make plans for the invasion of Japan at that time. As a result an order went out to all US Army Air Corps Special Service Units to cull all “I-A Soldiers” from their rosters and to transfer them into the Infantry. “1-P” meant totally physically fit. When the order arrived at the Special Services Headquarters at Drew Field where I was stationed, I was culled as one of the “I-A’s”! So by the middle of December 1944, I, with a number of other “1-s” were shipped from Drew Field, Tampa, Florida to Camp Gordon, located outside of Augusta, Georgia. We detrained around midnight of the 16th of December in a cold, driving rain at the Augusta Train Station. We were met by two hard boiled, and I do mean tough Infantry Sergeants, who lined us up at attention as we shivered in that bone chilling rain, dressed only in our light Florida Khaki uniforms, sans raincoats, completely unprepared for the weather we faced that night. After haranguing us about how they were going to make real soldiers “out of you fly boys,” they hustled us into waiting Army Trucks and carted us off to Camp Gordon. We arrived there around 1:30 A.M., lined up again and marched to our assigned barracks, where we were turned over to the barracks Sergeant, who in turn stood us at attention at the bunks that had been assigned to each of us. After he delivered his spiel about how he was going to make real soldiers of us, he delivered that last order that we were all painfully waiting for “Lights out!” With that, we crashed into our sacks and surrendered ourselves into the arms of Morpheus. It was 2:30 A.M.!





Author (center) in infantry training,  
Camp Gordon, Georgia, 1944



Author (kneeling first row, 4th from left) with Company A, in heavy weapons-training for invasion of Japan, Spring, 1945

At reveille, we found out how really different our lives were to be in the infantry as opposed to the Air Corps. At Drew Field, reveille was at 5:30 A.M. At Camp Gordon reveille sounded at 5:00 A.M.! So it was, on that first morning, we were routed out of our sacks at that hour, after having had a mere two and a half hours of sleep. The barracks sergeant came screaming into the barracks, giving us one half hour to brush our teeth, shave, get into fatigues and out in front of the barracks in formation, at attention, by 5:30 A.M.! At which time, he yelled and screamed at us for about five minutes, giving us instructions about our processing schedule before marching us off to the Mess Hall for morning chow!

When father and mother heard that Arthur was now overseas and in the thick of the fighting in Normandy and that I had been transferred out of Special Services in Florida and was now in training for combat duty as an infantry man at Camp Gordon, Georgia, they were shocked! Realizing the implications of our new assignments, they were both distressed. Letters from brother Nick spoke of the difficulty that he and brother Sol had in calming our mother who cried and carried on. Father, on the other hand, again was more stoical about it all. I recall Nick reported that mother was finally reconciled when brought to her senses one day by something father said in Nick's presence during one of her bad moments. I may not be quoting it verbatim after all of these years. Father warned her as follows: "Continue as you are, ranting about all the possible harm that might come to our sons, and you may very well find that your fears will come true! Is that what you want? Cast all these useless thoughts and fears out of your mind! Let us concentrate on good thoughts and pray that God will look after our boys and bring them back home to us safe and sound after all this is over with!"

Arthur, went on from the landing in Normandy through five campaigns in the European theater as a battle field surgeon operating on wounded soldiers on makeshift tables made of plywood placed on wooden carpenter horses in a mobile surgical unit housed in a tent. By the end of the war in Europe and at the time he completed his tour of duty, he had become the Commander of the 67th Field Hospital.

My tour of duty, however, took a different turn. At Camp Gordon, I was placed in Company A, a heavy weapons company, where I successfully completed the prescribed training course, which qualified me in the use of the 81 millimeter mortar, the 50 caliber machine gun, and carbine after nine weeks of training in the hot Georgia climate! From Camp Gordon I went with Company A to Camp Maxey, Texas where we were trained for the Invasion of Japan.

By the Spring of 1945, we were on our way to join the 10th Army as replacements. The 10th Army was being readied to invade Japan. Then on August 6, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima destroying it. Three days later on August 9, a second atomic bomb leveled the seaport, industrial city of Nagasaki. The complete devastation of those two cities caused Japan to sue for peace. Namoro Shigomitso formally signed the surrender on behalf of Emperor Hirohito and the Japanese Government with General Douglas MacArthur signing as Supreme Allied Commander on board the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945. So instead of going into Japan as an invasion trooper, within a month of the surrender, I, as a member of the 24th Corps of the 10th Army was shipped to Inchon, Korea, where I was assigned to the 545th Quartermaster Depot Company.



In the army of occupation, Inchon, Korea, November 11, 1945, the author is 3rd from the left



Author peaking over life raft on far right onboard the troop ship USS Admiral Eberle, returning home, Spring, 1946

The 545th QM Depot Company was stationed in the GI dubbed Ascom City part of Inchon. While there, I served as the Ration Breakdown Non-Com. responsible for figuring and issuing food to our troops in the area. Company Mess Sergeants came to me with their ration requisitions for approval and allocation of the required rations according to a formula. Within a month or so we went from issuing K Rations to C Rations and finally to fresh foods when it was finally made available to us.

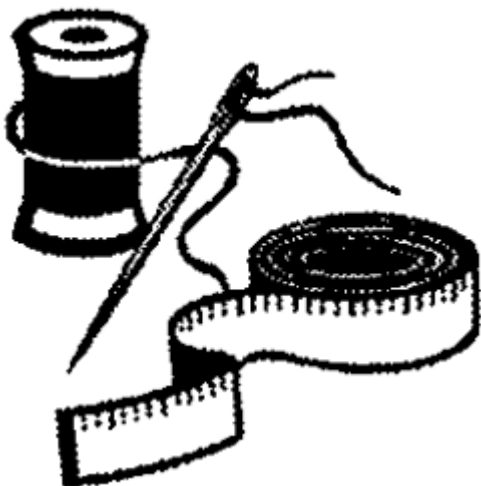
In January of 1946, brother Arthur was mustered out of the service and returned home having safely come through the dangers of war as a battlefield surgeon, much to the relief and happiness of father and mother and the rest of the family. I continued to serve in the 545th O.M Depot Company in Inchon, below the 38 parallel in South Korea, as part of the US Army of Occupation, while the Russian Army was occupying North Korea, above the 38th parallel. Our future at that time was still unknown. As far as we, who were part of the American Army of Occupation, holding the fort in South Korea, were concerned, we were still in the service for the duration! However, since hostilities with Japan had ended with the surrender in September, the minds of both mother and father about my safety had been eased and, of course, they were overjoyed to have Arthur back home and back in a surgical residency at St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland.

By the end of 1945, many of the South Koreans began to ask us, “when are you going home?” This was natural. After all who in any land would want to have foreign troops in their country for any length of time? It was not because we were creating any problems for them at the time. It was, as I believed then, and still do now, the

normal reaction of a patriot of any nation! About that time, we learned that President Harry Truman had issued a directive for downsizing the Army and had setup a point system for gradually getting citizen soldiers out of the service and back home as soon as possible. In early February, I received word that I had finally accumulated the required number of points to be mustered out of the service along with a number of others in my unit. We were sent to an evacuation station at the Port of Inchon for processing out. We boarded troop ship US Admiral Eberle on February 14 and sailed for home on February 18. We arrived at the port of Seattle in the State of Washington on March 1, where we went through the first stages of the discharge process. On March 5, we were sent on to the Separation Center at Camp Atterbury, Indiana on a slow moving troop train, which took four days to get there because of the many unexplained stops that we had to make along the way! We arrived there on the 9th of March. It seemed like there were thousands of us there waiting to be discharged. It took five days for me to get processed through! However, at long last I finally got my Honorable Discharge papers early on the morning of March 14, given my mustering out pay, and train fare to Cleveland, Ohio. "I was finally on my way home, a civilian again!"

I arrived at the Cleveland Union Terminal at 7:30 A.M. on the morning of March 15 1946. Whenever I have walked or driven by that great tower of a building in the years that have passed since my arrival on that morning, I have felt that same sense of exhilaration and sense of freedom that I felt on that morning! I can see myself, in olive drab striding up the ramp of the main concourse, as it was at the time, feeling fit and full of vim and vigor, carrying only a brown leather shaving kit that brother Nick had given me when I left that same terminal almost three years before! I had left all other military" impedimenta behind! By the way, 64 My Father Was a Tailor I still have that old leather kit and I still carry it with me when I go on trips. It has become an icon for me, a symbol, because it went with me as an important part of my gear from basic training, through six Army Camps, to the Asiatic/Pacific Theater and back home!

When I came out of the Terminal Building, and got my first glimpse of Public Square, the sun was shining and the sky was clear blue, without a cloud to mar its azure beauty. I stood in the middle of the sidewalk, gaping at every part of the Square as people scurried around me, on their way to work. I asked a gentleman whether the Lorain Avenue street car still stopped on the square directly across from the Terminal? He nodded, at the same time pointing to the street car that was arriving at that very moment across the way. I thanked him and ran across the street just in time to board it for the last leg of my journey home.



## Chapter 10. Back Home Again

BY 8:30 A.M. I was running up the front steps of our Western Bungalow on Almira avenue, home at last! I received a welcome like that of the prodigal son! Mother could not feed me enough. She kept saying how thin I had gotten. While I did weigh a little less than I had when I left home, I had only lost the excess weight I had put on in the sedentary life I had led before entering the service. Father was more interested in my experiences! He wanted to know all about my army life in the states and in South Korea! That evening, I had to go over the entire story with my brothers who converged on the parental home after work to see me. For me, March 15, 1946 was one of the most memorable and joyous days that God has given me in all of my eighty plus years. He had brought me back safe and sound into the bosom of my family!

The next day, I rose bright and early because I was champing at the bit, eager to get back into the civilian saddle again. Father, knowing me as he did, had days before gone through my wardrobe and had readied two of my suits for me to wear. One was a form fitting gray plaid with vest and one pair of pants, the other was a dark double breasted, with two pairs of pants! They had been my favorite suits and, as I could see were still in excellent condition. I tried them on and they fit me perfectly. By 9:30 A.M. dressed in the gray plaid, I was on my way to the Library seeking my job!

On the 16th of March 1946 around about ten thirty o'clock, I found myself walking across the Public Square towards the Main Library Building on Superior Avenue at East Third Street, after having been away for almost three years! I entered that magnificent structure feeling that I was coming back home again. However, I wondered about the kind of reception I might have in my former work home, especially since I was coming back to ask for a position comparable to the one I had left when I answered Uncle Sam's call. I really don't know why I should have had any doubt because the United States Congress had passed a law that required employers to reinstate former employees in jobs equivalent to the ones held prior to military service.

Upon entering the Library, I headed straight for the fourth floor and to office of Clarence S. Metcalf, who was the Director of the Library System. When I got off the elevator on the fourth floor, I met for the first time L. Quincy Mumford, who had recently been appointed as Assistant Director. I recognized him from Library newsletter pictures that I had received when I was overseas. However, since he did not know me, he asked me if he could help me. I thanked him, introduced myself saying, "I know where I'm going, I'm here to see Mr. Metcalf about coming back to work. I have been away in the service." He replied, "I have heard a lot about you! I am Assistant

Director and I happen to be responsible for personnel. We have been expecting your arrival. Let us see Mr. Metcalf together!” That was to be the beginning of a long work association and a great friendship.

Quincy Mumford, was really and truly a gentleman and a scholar. He was a handsome man, of average height, in his early forties, and sartorially perfect! He was a southerner, born in Ayden, North Carolina. I can still hear his delightful, deep, mellifluous voice. He was a graduate of Duke University (Phi Beta Kappa), and the Columbia University School of Library Science. He was a judicious, wise and humane administrator, a man of integrity. I shall never forget the warm welcome I received from Mr. Metcalf. He embraced me, giving me a great big bear hug. There were tears of joy in his eyes, as he said, “Welcome back, Eddie! We have missed you. It is so good to see you looking so well!” Needless to say, by this time, I had tears in my eyes too.

Clarence Metcalf, was also a man of average height, in his late sixties. He could be described as grand fatherly in appearance, with a full, round, and friendly face that showcased a pair of spectacled eyes that always seemed to shine with a warmth and tenderness and always made me feel welcome in his presence.

Mr. Metcalf’s appointment had been a controversial one. He had been appointed, Acting Librarian in April 1941 by one of the most political Library Boards in the history of the Library. He had followed Charles E. Rush who had resigned broken in health and spirit on February 6, 1941 after only three years on the job and after fighting a fruitless battle for the right to administer the Library with a Board that had usurped that power! Clarence Metcalf was appointed Librarian in October 1941 for a three year term over the strong objections of the professional staff and the state and national library associations. They maintained that since he was not a professional librarian, he was not qualified to be the Librarian of the Cleveland Public Library. Mr. Metcalf had come to the Library in 1924 and had ably served as its Business Manager until his appointment as Librarian. He had never dreamed that he would some day be called upon to run the library. He was frank to admit his lack of training as a librarian. He did just that by saying to a group of young Library School graduates, “I can’t explain how in the world I ever became the Head of the Cleveland Public Library. I did not start out to make librarianship a career!” In fact his sensitivity to his professional detractors caused him to ask the Board about three years after his appointment to change his title from Librarian to Director. This, however, did not in any way appease the library professionals who upon the completion of his three year term, petitioned the Board without success not to renew his appointment.

It was not until October of 1945 that Mr. Metcalf was able to gain a measure of acceptance when he sagaciously got the board to approve his appointment of the highly qualified professional librarian L. Quincy Mumford from the New York Public Library as Assistant Director, with the understanding that Mr. Mumford would succeed him upon his own retirement three years from that date, which actually did not happen until five years after that date!

So here I was coming back from military service in the Spring of 1946, seeking to return to my job as a professional at what must have been an important turning point in the history of the Library! As I sat there in the director’s office facing the two men who held my future in their hands, I was remembering my father’s advice when I had left home that morning for this meeting. Father had counseled me as follows” “See what the Library officials have to offer you, Remember you have been away from your profession for three years and need to pick up where you left off. Keep an open mind about whatever assignment is presented. Be receptive. Listen carefully to what they have to say and make your choice of assignment thoughtfully and wisely!”

Father's advice helped me to make a decision that morning that was to put me on the road to a fulfilling and successful career in librarianship. Mr. Metcalf and Mr. Mumford informed me that while I could rightfully expect by law to return to a job as a Branch Librarian in a branch library similar in size to the one I had relinquished when I answered my country's call, such a position would not be open until the Fall of the year.

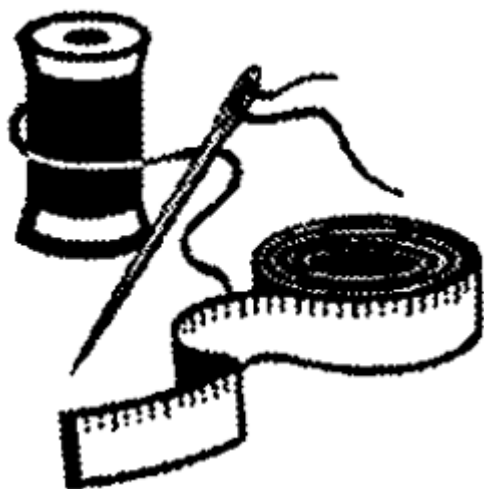
At this point, Miss Loraine later, the Supervisor of Branch Libraries joined the meeting. She also greeted me warmly and graciously welcomed me back "to the fold," as she put it. You see, I had been one of her Branch Librarians before the war. She advised that the Fleet Branch Library located at 6511 Fleet Avenue, off Broadway Avenue, in Cleveland's Polish community would be made available for me in September of the year, when the position was to become vacant, when the incumbent Branch Librarian would retire. Mr. Metcalf asked whether I would be willing to accept some temporary assignments in the meantime. When I asked what he had in mind, he explained that there were two very important jobs that needed doing. First, The Intercultural Branch Library that had been established in early 1943 in place of the old St. Clair Branch at East 55th and St. Clair Avenue had been closed after only three years for lack of interest in the community. The idea had been to bring together in one place books, materials, art, artifacts, and objects of all kinds, representative of all the nationalities in the city of Cleveland in order to preserve and bring about a better understanding of the various cultures. The idea had been proposed by Theodore Andrica who was at that time the Nationalities Editor of the defunct Cleveland Press. Thinking it to be a good idea, especially since it was war time, Mr. Metcalf had embraced the idea as a way to bring about a greater unity between the various nationalities of the city. He had selected Mr. Frank Suhadolnik who had come to the Cleveland Public Library from John Carroll University to head the Intercultural Library. I was told that a great effort had been made to get the various nationality groups to lend their cultural items and mementos to the library. The response had been good and many items, valuable and otherwise were lent and or given to the library. The branch had been opened with great pomp and ceremony and flourished for a short while. I was told that the branch was finally closed when it became apparent that the nationality groups had lost interest.

I was told that it would be my job to inventory the materials in the library, find those that were not given as outright gifts to the library, those that had been lent, find the rightful owners and return their property to them, securing proper receipts, while seeing that the gift materials were properly recorded and absorbed in the various collections where such materials belonged.

They then advised that my second assignment would be as professional librarian in the Public Relations and Exhibits Office, as assistant to Albert Carl Young, who was at that time, the director of that office, that my job would be to work with the media as his public relations assistant, and to take over the responsibility for the library's weekly radio programs. I would be completely responsible for writing all radio scripts and broadcasting them. I was to be the voice of the Cleveland Public Library on radio! Although the first assignment did not have too much appeal, the second one, doing public relations work and radio broadcasting, did, very much, so I accepted both tasks!

It was agreed that since I had just returned from active foreign military service that I should take a month of R & R and plan to start the first of my new assignments on April 15, 1946.





## Chapter 11. I Make My Comeback in The Cleveland Library

The first assignment, cleaning up the Intercultural Branch Library, turned out to be exactly that! It was without exaggeration, one big, horrible mess! On my first visit to the building, it was immediately apparent to me that no one had been there in the months that it had been closed. The rooms were filthy. The floors, furniture, book shelves, books, magazine and newspaper racks and their contents were covered with cobwebs and several inches of dust. In several places paint and pieces of plaster from ceiling areas had fallen as a result of rain seepage through faulty roof and wall areas. Some of this debris rested on valuable artifacts and memorabilia. It was evident that no one had been there just to check the building and its contents, let alone do any cleaning or maintenance of the building's interior or exterior! I was sick at heart at what I saw and immediately reported it to the administration and got some action out of the Buildings Department to clean and do the necessary maintenance so I could go in and do my job!

From April 15, 1946 until September 1, 1946, I divided my days, spending half a day bringing order out of the chaos that had been left at the defunct Intercultural Branch Library. I was faced with the monumental task My Comeback in the Cleveland Library of identifying and discovering ownership of artifacts, objects, textiles and other ethnic items with minimal records of ownership. In addition, in those cases where records existed, I had difficulty finding the items. It was only after about three months, that I was able to locate and make my own list of items and by contacting people on an original list of those who had signed up as members of the branch library, to discover who had given what! I recall that one very valuable middle eastern tapestry eluded me for a long time. I could not find it in all of the logical storage places that one would normally think such a valuable piece should be stored or displayed. I finally found it, covered with dust, draped over the library's grand piano stored in one of the back rooms! It was not until sometime in August of the year that I was able to find who had lent what and to return and get receipts for all such "items, and to see that items that had been given as outright gifts to the library were distributed to those branches or divisions of the library where such. items would normally be classified or cataloged. I brought closure to this assignment by writing a full report and submitting it along with a full inventory of the items returned to owners, as well as a list of the gift items that had been absorbed into the collections of the library system.

As disconcerting, tedious and tiring the Intercultural Branch Library assignment had been, the public relations, radio broadcasting job was professional, creative and fun! My afternoons spent in public relations work, writing library news clips for the news media, writing the scripts for the Saturday noon radio programs, and my weekend appearances on the air were delightful and challenging times for me. They more than made up for the drudgery

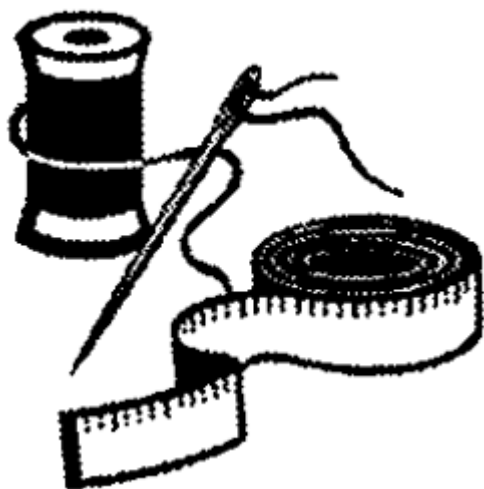
experienced during my morning hours spent bringing order out of the chaos that existed at the Intercultural Library. I had been given my first experience in radio script writing and broadcasting at WBOE and WTAM from 1938 until 1942 during the latter days of my service as a reference librarian in the Sociology Division at the Main Library and while I was a Branch Librarian at the Woodland Branch Library, before I had gone into military service. Now being able to do such work as one of my primary jobs was a complete joy for me. It not only gave me the opportunity to be creative in writing but also articulate in speech!

So it was that from April 15, 1946 until September 1, 1946, I reveled in a dual job that gave me an experience that very few professional librarians get in a lifetime! During those four and one half months, I was not only able to bring official and proper closure to the Intercultural Library, but also managed to produce and broadcast a radio program every Saturday afternoon at 12:15 P.M. over Station WJW.

On September 1, 1946, as scheduled and promised by Mr. Metcalf and Mr. Mumford, I was appointed Branch Librarian of the Fleet Branch Library, located at 6511 Fleet Avenue which was treasured and greatly respected in that Polish enclave of the City of Cleveland. Here I was to get a liberal education in what it means to be the Librarian in an ethnic community. I also continued doing the radio programs! Why? Apparently, as My Comeback in the Cleveland Library Albert Carl Young put it, I had built up a good audience. In addition, Mr. Metcalf and Mr. Mumford wanted me to continue! I continued with pleasure. In fact I continued doing the radio work as an additional assignment over and above my full time job assignments as I progressed over the years from position to position (without additional remuneration) until January 31, 1956. I enjoyed writing and broadcasting every script written in those years, and remember with pleasure men like Wally Kay, who on Saturday at noon so many years ago announced: "These programs are shortcuts to those great books of all times and nations which concern all of us, because in them the infinite variety of the world and men's little changing nature are expressed with lasting felicity. These programs are prepared by Edward D'Alessandro. The subject today is 'The Brownings' Mr. D'ALESSANDRO ..."

The Saturday noon radio programs were to be the vehicles that provided the greatest impetus for my professional and personal life in the years following my return from military service. I Was single, living at home with my parents. Brothers Nick and Sol were busy with their families and occupations, Brother Art was in residence at St. Vincent Charity Hospital, pursuing his career. Living at home, I had the advantage of father's continuing advice and counsel at those times whenever I wrestled with difficult career or personal decisions. A word or two with father about a problem often helped to make the solution of the problem easier. I am not saying that I always followed his advice after consulting with him on a matter. Suffice it to say, there were times when I was sorry that I had not done so!

Father had encouraged me to continue doing the radio work when I became Branch Librarian at the Fleet Branch Library and I was forever grateful for that bit of advice. That experience provided valuable professional exposure for my abilities within and without the Library System. It built a fair sized listening audience for "The Great Books" programs and created some loyal and steady fans.



## Chapter 12. Grace Musché, the Love of My Life

One of my fans was Grace Musche! Grace was a Library Assistant in the Branch Department Office located on the fourth floor of the Main Library. She had come into my life one summer evening in 1939 in the Sociology Division of the Main Library. I had been in my position there as a Junior Reference Assistant Librarian for about a year. I recall that On that particular evening, I was stationed at the central reference desk. I had just finished answering a telephone reference question when she appeared before me with a list of reference books. She explained that she was taking a library course in reference work and needed directions to the book stacks where the reference books might be found. To use a trite phrase, “it was love at first sight.” There before me was the most beautiful girl in the world! I was so taken by her beauty, friendly smile and breezy manner that I found myself after what appeared to be minutes finally able to mumble, “I’ll be happy to help you.” I took her to the section where the books she sought were to be found, acknowledged her “thank you,” and hastily and self-consciously retreated to my desk. I did not see her the rest of that evening because I became very busy with others needing reference assistance. From that night on, I was not able to get her out of my mind. I kept seeing in my mind’s eye, that lovely, slender, brunette, dressed in a summery print, whose bright, green eyes danced, whose cupid bow lips wore a friendly, honest and genuine smile that made me feel warm.

From that summer evening in 1939 until the day I left home for military service in 1943, I saw Grace from time to time as our paths crossed in the Library when we would greet one another in a friendly way, however, that is as far as it went. Much as I wanted to, I never had the courage to ask her for a date. I must admit, I was afraid that she’d refuse. Our friendship began when I finally got the courage to write to her from my first Army post Gulfport Airfield, Gulfport, Mississippi. Her reply gave me more courage. She wrote that she and other staff members had come to see me off at the train station, but had missed me by only a few minutes. Grace became a real pen pal and wrote to me regularly throughout my entire tour of duty in the states and abroad. Friendship blossomed into romance through our war-time correspondence. By- the time that I returned to civilian life in 1946, I felt ready, willing and able to begin a serious courtship. Now that I was settled in my job as the Branch Librarian at the Fleet Branch Library and earning \$3,420 a year, I felt I was also even ready to ask Grace to marry me! I did not have the nerve as yet. We dated exclusively as often as we were able, making sure that our social life did not interfere with our work. We had decided that we had to be very careful in this regard because we not only worked in the same department of the Library, but also for the same supervisor. Grace worked in the office of the Supervisor of Branch Libraries, and I as a Branch Librarian reported to that same supervisor! In December of 1946, I finally

worked up enough courage to ask Grace to marry me. She accepted! Our engagement came as a complete surprise to our supervisor and all of our coworkers!



Wedding Day, November 29, 1947



Adeline Museh, Grace's mother



Grace Musch my World War II pen pal

I chose to give Grace her engagement ring on Christmas Eve of 1946 because her birthday was on Christmas Day. It proved to be the most appropriate time. I had been invited by Adeline Musche, Grace's widowed mother to join the Musch4 family for dinner and to help trim their tree. After enjoying one of Grace's mother's delicious German dinners, which included her famous potato pancakes, Grace and I, joined her mother, her younger sister Edna, and brother Paul, to trim the tree. When the last ornament had been placed on the tree, I fished the ring box from my pocket and nervously handed it to Grace. Heart pounding, I waited for the reaction from Grace, her mother and from her brother Paul, because they had no previous warning. Edna alone had known before hand that I had planned to give Grace the ring on that evening. Edna had been my coconspirator. In fact, weeks before, I had enlisted her help in getting Grace's finger size for me from one of her rings. Edna also without alerting Grace had somehow gotten Grace to indicate her preference in engagement rings when window shopping at Beattie's Jewelry Shoppe earlier. Edna had then taken me to Beattie's and shown me the ring called the Orange Blossom, which had been Grace's choice. It was exactly what I suspected Grace might have chosen. Grace disliked ostentation. So it was just like her to have picked out the Orange Blossom which was petite in size and simple. It's slender, gold band was capped by a middle sized, genuine, nicely cut diamond that gave off a rainbow of colors every time a ray of light kissed it. Two smaller diamonds that also seemed to shimmer with rainbow hues, were artistically placed on the band to the right and left of the main diamond. I waited for Grace's reaction as she opened the box. On seeing the ring, she gave an excited whoop, and gave me my first real big hug and a kiss. I have never forgotten that moment. When the rest of the family embraced us amid laughter and tears, I knew that I had made the grade!

When Grace returned to work on the Monday after Christmas, her coworkers on seeing her engagement ring asked who it was that she had kept secret so long. They were all surprised that it was their own Ed D'Alessandro. However, when our boss, the supervisor of Branches came in later and asked Grace, "Who is the lucky young man?" She was thunderstruck when Grace, replied, "Mr. D'Alessandro." Grace and I never knew whether our supervisor approved or not. We wondered afterward whether she might have been angry because we had not taken her into our confidence and advised her of our intentions before hand. **While we intentionally had been very secretive** about our relationship as far as our supervisor and coworkers were concerned, both families had been in on it from the start because there was one very important obstacle that we had to surmount. Grace was Lutheran and strong in her faith and I was Catholic! Early on, Grace and I had consulted with her mother and had received her blessing even though Grace had agreed to be married in the Catholic Church. I had expected real problems with my parents, however, my parents surprised me and gave us their blessing. We were married on November 29, 1947 at St. Rocco's Church.

Since neither of our families had the means for a large church wedding and all the usual trimmings, we were married with only the immediate families in attendance. Brother Arthur was my Best Man and Grace's sister, Edna was the Maid of Honor. Grace wore a tailored jacket and skirt of golden hue, a small corsage of violets, a dark blue hat, with small face veil, and blue pumps. She was beautiful! I wore a tailored, double-breasted, dark green, pin stripe suit, white shirt with print tie, white breast pocket handkerchief, and a white carnation in my lapel.

Grace and I went to Washington, D.C. for our honeymoon. The train fare for both of us and seven days at D.C.'s newest Statler Hotel were a wedding gift from Walter Horn of the Horn and Norris Lithograph Company and Brother Sol's boss, for whom I had worked one summer, before I got my first job as a page at Brownell School Junior High School Library. Without Mr. Horn's generous gift we would not have had a honeymoon because



neither Grace nor I felt we could afford to furnish the small apartment we had rented and have a honeymoon as well. Mr. Horn has had a special place in our lives over the years. Needless to say, Grace and I had a wonderful time in the Nation's Capital for those seven memorable days in 1947.



Grace and infant son Edward, 1949



The author & Grace in their apartment, Winter of 1947

Following our honeymoon, Grace and I returned to our little three room apartment which was located on the second floor over a florist shop in a two story office building across the street from Saint Ignatius Catholic Church, at the corner of West Boulevard and Lorain Avenue. Although we had started to look for apartments shortly after we were engaged in December 1946, we had been lucky to find this one because those war veterans who had gotten home before me had gobbled up practically all of the housing that was available in our price range at the time. Brother Nick had come to our aid. He had contacted a medical friend who was willing to sublet the apartment he and his family had occupied adjacent to his medical office, when he had recently vacated and moved into a large home on West Boulevard. Grace and I had quickly negotiated and secured the apartment at forty dollars per month from the good doctor and had gotten it furnished as simply and economically as possible shortly before our marriage. So we were indeed fortunate to have our own cozy, little first home to come back to after our honeymoon! Although modest, it was to be our home from the end of 1947 until the end of January 1950 when we

were able to purchase our first home with that wonderful GI Loan that made it possible for World War II Veterans to assume home loans at an interest rate of only 4 percent.

The years we spent in that little apartment were years of adjustment for both of us. We resumed our careers at the Library. Grace continued in her job as a Library Assistant in the Branch Department Office and I as Branch Librarian at Fleet Branch Library. Our apartment not only became the quiet haven to which we retreated at the end of our busy work days, but also the place where we developed as husband and wife, learned the meaning of give and take, of sharing, of cooperation, of forgiveness, of trust, of the kind of love that transcends the sexual. We both learned that marriage was hard work, and we both worked hard at making it work, and we fell more in love as a result. On October 9, 1948, we became a family in that apartment when our first son, Edward Rocco, was born.



Rocco and Maria Isabella D'Alessandro  
Golden wedding day in 1948



Rocco D'Alessandro  
the author's father, 1950

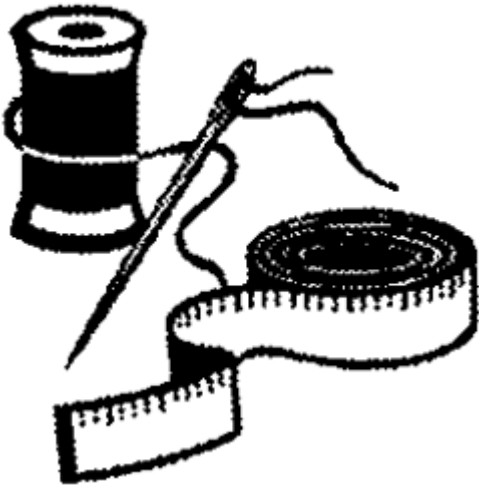


Grandma and Grace with infant Edward, 1949



Brother Arthur's fiancée Rita Kemer with infant Edward, 1949

Grace's lively personality made that apartment a warm and fun place. It's location also made it a fun place. The hallway that led to our bathroom dead ended at a locked door that led into the doctor's treatment room, apparently arranged that way for his convenience when he lived in the apartment. There was no way that we could escape hearing what went on in that treatment room when we used our bathroom. There were times when we could not help hearing some very interesting and sometimes some sad as well as some happy conversations. One evening, I was astounded to hear the doctor prescribing a glass of red wine before dinner to a patient with heart disease. This was 1948. I had never heard a doctor giving that kind of advice to a heart patient in that day and age! I, as a heart patient, am now having a glass of red wine every evening before dinner on doctor's orders. That doctor was years ahead of his time.



## Chapter 13. Celebrations and Family Goals are Reached

Father and mother completed fifty years of marriage in 1948. Their golden wedding anniversary was marked by a family dinner held at The Gables Restaurant located on Lorain Avenue near Kamms Corners. I recall it as a quiet intimate family gathering that was especially pleasing to father. As he looked across the table he remarked that he was rich! He explained that he was not rich in wealth or material things, that his riches were in family. He concluded by saying, "Truly, it is better to be rich in family than in money!" He was surrounded by his four sons of whom he was so proud along with the wives and children of those of us who were married. There were brother Nick with wife Leona and daughter Joanne, Sol and wife Marian and sons, Thomas, Robert, and Michael, and myself with my wife, Grace, and infant son, Edward Rocco. Brother Art was accompanied by his fiancé Rita Kemer, a nurse that he had met and fallen in love with at St. Vincent Charity Hospital. She was a demure blonde, attractive young lady from Parma, Ohio.

Art and Rita were married in the summer of the following year. Theirs was another lovely wedding that was solemnized at St. Charles Church in Parma with Father Monahan officiating. Rita was attended by her three sisters. Her twin sister, Mercedes, was her Maid of Honor. Sisters Sylvia and Virginia were bridesmaids. I was Art's Best Man. Vincent LaMaida and Gene Zannoni rounded out the wedding party.

Art, having finished his third year of residency at St. Vincent Charity Hospital, had begun his medical practice in Brother Nick's offices which were located at Kamm's Corners, not too far from Fairview General Hospital. After about a year or so, Art moved his medical practice to Parma where he and Rita purchased their first home.

Brother Nick's practice was flourishing. Brother Sol had taken the leadership role at the Horn and Norris Lithograph Company, and I had made a place for myself in the Fleet Branch Library neighborhood. I had been accepted by that Polish community as "Their Librarian." In addition to providing library service to the people, I was continuing to do the Library's radio programs. I had succeeded Charles A. Vanik (who later was elected to the U.S. Congress), as President of the Southeast Community Council, after having served as his vice-president in that organization. To top all this activity off, I had been recruited along with several other young Cleveland librarians by Mortimer Adler and Chicago University's young president, Robert Hutchins to take their Great Books course and to lead the Great Books Discussion Groups in the branches of the Cleveland Public Library. Father was so very proud during this time, because he had completed what he had set out to do. He had lived to see each of his sons successfully at work in their chosen professions, and happy in what they were doing.





## Chapter 14. I Am Asked to Change Jobs with No Increase in Pay and Promoted to Another Job in Less Than Two Years

In early October of 1949, I received a telephone call from Mr. Mumford, who was now director of the Library System requesting that I come to his office for a conference right away. I was surprised and a little apprehensive, wondering what might have created the need for me to be summoned to the director's office in such a hurry? I felt I was doing well at the Fleet Branch' I did not know of any complaints about my work there. Never-the-less, I was on pins and needles as I drove downtown to the Main Library on that day. When I entered Mr. Mumford's office, I found Miss Slater, my supervisor with him! Now, I was really worried. Mr. Mumford invited me to sit in a chair across from his desk. By this time, I did not know what to expect. When Mr. Mumford finally spoke, he said, "Eddie, how would you like to be Branch Librarian at Eastman Branch over on the West Side? Miss Slater has informed me that that position will be open at the end of this month. She and I feel that you are the person to head that branch! You have done such a good job at the Fleet Branch." He added, "this is a lateral transfer with no pay increase!"

I was speechless for a second or two, however, I soon found myself saying, "I am very happy at Fleet Branch. I like the community and I am so involved there. The people there like me. I have been there only three years. I feel that I have a lot more that I can accomplish there!" Mr. Mumford replied, "Why don't you take a day or so to think this over and let me know at the end of the week whether you agree to make this change or not." With that, the conference was over. Miss Slater asked me to join her in her office to discuss the offer further with me. She advised me to accept the new position, saying that if I were to refuse this offer, that Mr. Mumford might not think of me again in the future, when a promotion might be involved.

I left Miss Slater's office with mixed feelings about the offer to move to the Eastman Branch. My practical self was telling me to accept the offer, after all even though there would be no pay increase, our apartment which was located at 10232 Lorain Avenue would be a mere ten minute walk from the Eastman Branch which was' located at the corner of 115th Street and Lorain Avenue. I would be saving the cost of gasoline, wear and tear on the car and on myself, etc., etc.

My discussion of the matter with Grace, ended with her saying, as always, "Ed, do whatever you feel is best for

you, and what ever decision you make will be fine with me.” When I spoke with father about it, he presented me with a point of view, that I had not considered. He asked, “If you go to the new branch library, will you be getting a different type of experience than you are now getting at the Fleet Branch? Will you have to meet new challenges that will be better for you professionally? Forget the salary!” The answer to his questions were “yes.” I would be getting experience in administering a busier library with a larger circulation and larger and more cosmopolitan reading public. There was no doubt that I would grow professionally. At the end of the week, I accepted the job.

On October 31, 1949, I assumed the position of Branch Librarian at the Eastman Branch. Although it was a lateral transfer from the Fleet Branch, without any increase in salary, I did enjoy being close to home. I was able to walk to work, and even on occasion walked home at noon for lunch, which saved me the expense of transportation and some lunch money, as well as wear and tear on the car and me physically.

Having ones place of work so close to home was helpful in case of family emergencies as well. I can remember one case in particular when I had to rush home from work shortly before lunch time one day, to rescue my son. On this particular day, Grace had returned from the grocery store with son Edward, who was about a year and a half old at the time. Routinely, as she had done many times before, Grace left the loaded grocery handcart at the foot of the apartment stairway, carried Edward upstairs to the apartment and deposited him inside before going down to get the groceries. As always, she had placed the door keys on the three shelf book case inside, near the doorway. Leaving the door open, she hurried down to retrieve the groceries, as she had done countless times before. However, this time, something different happened! Edward decided to shut the door! You guessed it! The I Am Asked to Change Jobs 93 door locked shut. Grace was at wits end, there she was outside with the groceries and no key to get in, and Edward, alone doing his own thing. Grace was worried sick because she had just placed a small ham in the oven because she was expecting me home for lunch. She feared Edward might open the oven and hurt himself.

Luckily, Grace was able to use the telephone in the doctor’s office next door to call me at the Library up the street. I raced down the street to the rescue. That was a day I had left my key at home! Foolishly, I decided not to call the fire department. I opted to go to the back of our building, climb to the top of a garage adjacent to the building via a tall garbage can. With Grace’s help, I pulled the garbage can up to the roof of the garage. By standing on the can, I was able to pull myself up to the window well located outside of one of our bedroom windows. When I got there, the window was locked! I broke the window and got in to find Edward sitting on the floor in the living room, playing with his toys! That was a day when I took a long lunch hour. After all that, I had to take a shower, change my clothes, get a quick lunch before I went back to work, “Oh! Yes!” After work that evening, I had to replace the window I had broken!

I had the pleasure of serving the Eastman Branch Library community until May 14, 1951. During that time, I continued doing the Cleveland Public Library’s radio programs and continued to serve as one of the Library’s Great Books Discussion Leaders. As I had expected, I found the Eastman Branch Library readers a real challenge. They were voracious readers, and used their neighborhood library as families. The building was too small. Evenings found every reading table filled with people who were there for a purpose.

The children’s room was wall-to-wall with children and their parents, seeking help for school assignments. The

Adult Room was always bursting at the seams with adults doing serious and recreational reading and young people doing homework. Again, as in my previous assignments, I felt that I was making a contribution to the community and felt the satisfaction of knowing that I was making a difference in the lives of the people I was serving.

Sometime early in the Spring of 1951, Mr. Mumford telephoned again, and invited me to join him in a meeting at headquarters the next day. When I arrived in his office the next morning, I found that Ms. Loraine Slater, my supervisor, was already there along with a man in his early forties, whom I had not met or seen before. He was tall, slender and friendly in manner.

Mr. Mumford introduced him as Ed Colburn. Mr. Mumford advised that Mr. Colburn had been hired to reorganize the Book Order, the Catalog, and the Book Repair Departments into a new Department to be called The Processing Department, that the three former departments were to become divisions of the new department, all under the supervision of Mr. Colburn, who was to streamline and make more efficient the activities of those three units. I was informed that Mr. Colburn had come to us from Northwestern University Library, where he had been Director of Processing. During all this, I was wondering where did I fit into all of this?

Mr. Mumford explained that the incumbent Heads of the Order and Catalog units were to continue to head their units, however, the Head of the Book Repair Unit had opted to retire, leaving the new position open. I was stunned. He was now asking me to change jobs again! And this time in a part of library work that I had never done before!

I thanked Mr. Mumford for the offer, but said that I had no experience in book repair work and that I had never considered processing as something I would want to do when I was in Library School, that I had opted for public service and reference and research when I was in the Graduate School of Library Science at Western Reserve University. In fact, I had not ever considered myself as a behind the scenes person when it came to doing library work, and book repair and processing of library materials to me would be working behind the scenes! I told Mr. Mumford that I liked people and wanted to serve people directly as a reference and research person, that I wanted to be out where the action is! Furthermore, I was happy in my work at the Eastman Branch Library!

Mr. Mumford's reply was, "Eddie, you can learn to do this, just as I did in my career." A good part of his career had been in processing in the New York Public Library and he had spent a year in the early forties organizing the processing Department of the Library of Congress. Both Ms. Slater and Mr. Colburn supported him in his position on the matter. The conference ended with my agreeing to think the offer over for a few days before making up my mind one way or the other.

This was real difficult decision for me to make. It was much more difficult than the earlier decision to move from the Fleet Branch to the Eastman Branch. This move would require not only changing my service specialty, but also would have me working in a field in which I had had no training or experience. In addition, I was being asked to take over the direction and supervision of a division with a larger staff than I had ever supervised, a staff that was being absorbed into a new department, under a new department head, who had been brought in from outside, a staff of thirty-three women and one man who had worked under the supervision of a woman division head, who was retiring after forty years of service!

As was my custom, I talked the matter over first with my Grace. This time, she was intrigued with the idea of

my trying a new field of library science. Without hesitation, she advised me to accept the offer. She felt that this experience in the processing area would not only be challenging for me but would also broaden my experience in Library Administration. I still was not sold on the idea because this move would also mean going back downtown to work. I would be giving up the convenience of being able to walk to work from home and return to the daily hassle of having to drive to and from work, with the added cost of gasoline and car maintenance. Above all, I liked being a Branch Librarian. I liked the hustle and bustle of a busy neighborhood library. I liked helping people with their reference and research requests and with their recreational reading needs. I kept saying to myself, "I am a people person, not a behind the scenes person!"

When I discussed the matter with father, he reacted like Grace. He too advised me to accept the offer and for the same reasons that Grace had mentioned, however, he presented me with a new thought or proposition to make to Mr. Mumford in connection with his offer. Father advised that I should accept the position of Chief of the Book Repair Division on the condition that I would not be stuck in that position forever, that I get Mr. Mumford to promise that after a reasonable period of time, I would be returned to some area of public service in the Library System! That made good sense to me so I told father that I would sleep on the idea and make up my mind on the matter in a day or so.

I was still not sure whether I could accept a position in an area that I had had no experience! Then a new idea entered my mind. I decided that in addition to accepting the position on the condition that I be guaranteed that I would not become a permanent fixture in the Book Repair Division, that I ask Mr. Mumford to also agree to allow me to make arrangements with August Alpers, the only local Library Bookbinder in Cleveland to spend my free Saturdays for at least two months in his bindery so that I could learn the art of bookbinding and book repair. In so doing, I felt that I would be better prepared to supervise the thirty-three women and one man in the Book Repair Division. When I presented my counter-offer to Mr. Mumford, he agreed and I was committed to leaving public service for awhile.

On May 14, 1951, I became a part of the new Processing Department as Chief of the Book Repair Division of the Cleveland Public Library. I had been charged to bring the operation of the division into the twentieth century. No attempt had been made over the years to mechanize or to introduce new methods or modern materials in the repair or preservation of library materials. Torn pages in books were still being mended in the old fashioned way. The book menders were laboriously repairing torn pages using the age old library paste, brush and Japanese tissue, a time consuming method. We stopped using that method and time worn materials, and began using transparent mending tape (not scotch tape), which was now available from Library supply houses. We began using plastic glues, which were also now available from suppliers for tipping in missing pages and for repairing and/or replacing the spines and covers of books worthy of such treatment. We introduced new equipment such as the commercial type Singer Sewing Machine which was being used by Library Binderies for binding thin books, for over-sewing books under a half inch in thickness. This enabled us to do that type of bookbinding in our own shop instead of sending such books to the commercial binderies, thus saving the Library a good portion of its bookbinding budget to cover the increasing costs of having our larger books, periodicals and newspapers bound by the commercial binderies. This equipment and the plastic glues also enabled us to bind those periodicals and serials, which for years had been placed on the bookshelves, secured only by the practice of tying I Am Asked to Change Jobs them together between two pieces of binder's board with the age old pink tape. This was not only a

better way of preserving such materials but also prevented the loss of individual issues of such materials as was common before, when such items were only tied together.

We also changed the system of sending materials to the commercial binderies. For years all items sent in from the branches and divisions of the library earmarked for commercial binding were sent to the binderies after a cursory review by the Head of the Book Repair Division or her assistant, without regard to any type of budget planning. As a result, by May or June of each year the bookbinding monies would run out. This meant that large back logs of books to be bound would build up during the last six or seven months of each year! We introduced a monthly quota system, with a certain amount of money to be spent each month. In this way each unit of the Library knew how many volumes they could send each month. This meant that a controlled amount went to the binderies every month and we were assured that our bookbinding funds would be available to cover our binding needs for every month of the year! This was good for the Library and the bookbinders. Our branches and divisions were assured of having some bookbinding done each month and the bookbinders could depend on a planned flow of work for their shops. It was no longer feast or famine for either. The day when the Library units and the bookbinders would have a feast of bookbinding for the first five or six months of the year, and then starve for such work during the last six or seven months of the year, as had been the case in years past, was finally over.

My tour of duty in the Book Repair Division did bring me new challenges. It not only honed my skills as an administrator and ability to direct and supervise a large staff made up of diverse personalities and abilities but also gave me invaluable experience in the business end of library work. Yes, I learned the art of book repair and binding from August Alpers at the General Bookbinding Company on my free Saturdays at the beginning of my tour as Chief of the Book Repair Division. I learned how to handle and control a good size bookbinding budget efficiently and wisely, making sure that we not only got the most for the Library's money but also received a quality product!

I became involved and participated in the binding committees of the American Library Association and The American Binding Institute and became totally involved in the world of bookbinding. To my surprise after I had been in the field about a year or two, the Cleveland Plain Dealer sent a reporter with a photographer to interview me about my work in the field. An article encompassing several pages with pictures appeared in a subsequent Sunday Edition in what was then known as the paper's rotogravure or magazine section. I was amused to see that the article chose to dub me as "The Book Doctor." The pictures of my staff and I at work were in beautiful color. You may have guessed by now, I was thoroughly wrapped up in my behind the scenes work and loving it! I had also gained a new skill. I had learned how to write specifications and contracts.



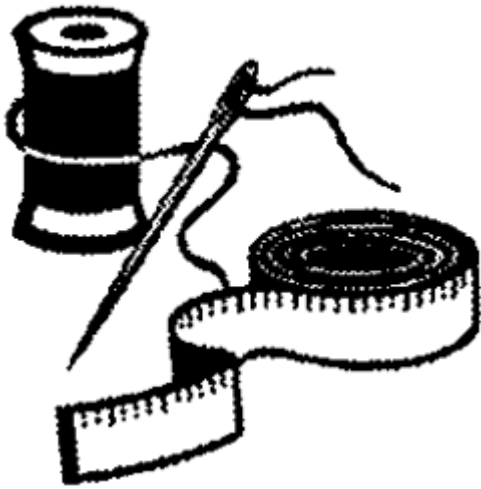
Four-year-old Edward holding  
infant brother Paul, 1952



Edward & Paul, Winter, 1953

It was at this point in my life and career that my Grace gave me a second son. At 1:00 P.M. on September 30,

1952, while at work at my desk, I received a telephone call from Myrtle Malone whose home was two doors away from our home, advising me that she had taken my Grace to St. John Hospital, that the baby was on the way! After informing my staff that I was leaving for the day, I lost no time getting to the hospital. Not long after my arrival, Paul Alan was born. Grace had delivered quickly and well, just as she had done with Edward, our first born. We had now become a family of four! Both sides of the family were elated when I reported that the new addition to our family and Grace had come through the delivery perfectly and well, Father, after voicing his congratulations, said, "You also have now become rich in family."





## Chapter 15. Lawrence Quincy Mumford Goes to Washington

In July of 1954, Mr. Mumford announced that he had been nominated by Senator Bricker, the Senior Senator from Ohio to fill the position of Librarian of Congress, that President Eisenhower had submitted his name to the United States Senate for confirmation, and that the Senate had approved his appointment unanimously. He added that he was to leave for his new position in the nation's capital in September. Although we were all saddened at the thought of losing him as our Director, we were glad that he had been tapped to head the great Library of Congress, which was not only the nation's largest and most prestigious library but also most respected among the world's national libraries! Mr. Mumford also advised us that he would be resigning his position as Director of the Cleveland Public Library as of August 13, for a brief vacation before going to the Library of Congress.

Mr. Mumford did not forget his promise that I would not be kept indefinitely in the Book Repair Division. On August 1, 1954, I was promoted to the position of Assistant Department Head. This brought me back to the Main Library as Assistant Head of the Main Library, where I was to share the responsibility of supervising the services of the Library's twelve public service or subject divisions, the Newspaper Division and the Municipal Reference Library located in the Cleveland City Hall, with Emelia Wefel, who was the Head of the Department and who had been one of my mentors.

I had spent three years and three months behind the scenes as Chief of the Book Repair Division. I must confess that I had come to like its work and challenges. It gave me an experience that made me a better librarian and helped to prepare me for future and more important assignments that came my way later on.

Before they left for Washington, D.C., the staff of the Cleveland Public Library held a farewell reception for Quincy and Pamela Mumford at the Hotel Cleveland. It was a grand occasion that generated mixed feelings. On the one hand, we were all happy for the Mumfords, for the great future that lay ahead of them in the nation's capital. On the other hand, we felt a great sense of loss.

During the course of the reception, Mr. Mumford took me aside for a private conversation. He was brief and to the point as always. He said, "Eddie, I know that we have just promoted you to join Miss Wefel as Assistant Head of the Main Library, however, I have been thinking that I would like to have you come to join me at the Library of Congress as soon as possible. I would like to have you as an assistant there." I felt like the floor could have

opened up and swallowed me at that moment. Never in my wildest dreams had I ever thought that I would ever be offered the chance to work in the greatest library in the world!" He must have seen that I was in shock, and quickly added, "talk this over with Grace and let me have your answer before Pam and I leave for Washington next week!" I thanked him for his kind offer and hastily retreated to find Grace in the crowded ballroom.

On the way home that evening, I told Grace about the offer. She was speechless for a moment. However, she said, "I'll go along with whatever you decide. You have to decide. It is your professional future." For a couple of days we went back and forth on the thought of pulling up our roots and moving to Washington. We had only been in our new home two years. We considered the children's ages. Edward was almost six and Paul was not quite two years old. We asked ourselves was it fair to uproot them at this time. I kept asking myself, would it be fair to leave Cleveland Public Library so soon after my promotion, and to leave it after it had been so good to me, since it had given me my first job during the depression, since it had helped me work my way through junior high, high school, college and Graduate Library School.

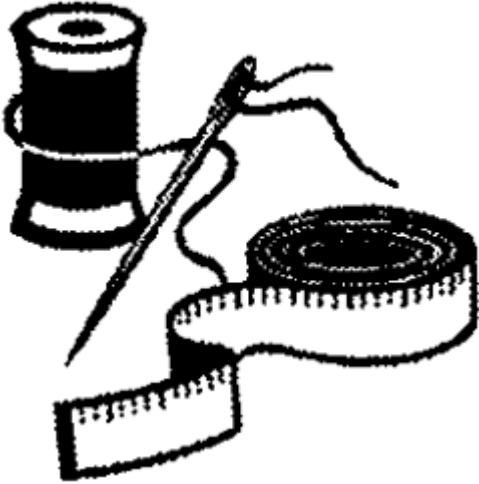
Grace and I considered the pros and cons. The idea of going to work at the Library of Congress was so tempting. We both recalled our wonderful honeymoon in Washington, D.C. Our marriage had begun there so happily. On the other hand, I was about to start my job as the second in command of the prestigious Main Library of the second largest public library in the nation, sharing that responsibility with Emelia E. Wefel, the person that I considered to be the Dean of Librarians in the State of Ohio at the time. Grace and I thought about our families. There were Grace's widowed mother and younger sister and brother. There were my elderly mother and father and brothers. Grace and I shared the responsibility of looking to the financial and physical needs of our parents with our siblings. We all lived in close proximity to be able to help our parents in time of need.

As was my custom, I sought father's advice, as I had done in the past about career decisions. This time, he surprised me. He was reluctant to influence my decision one way or the other. He merely said, "this is a decision you are going to have to make on your own." This time there was no wise lead or suggestion that was going to help me make up my mind. I sensed that he was remembering his father's strong opposition to his own decision to leave the family to come to the United States so many years ago. Father, I felt was making sure that I did not receive the slightest inkling that he did not want me to leave home. He made sure of that when he finally said, "you will have my blessing whatever course you take." Mother on the other hand, made it clear that she wanted me to stay home. No if ands or buts!

In the end, my loyalty to the Cleveland Public Library became the deciding factor. Before Mr. Mumford left for Washington, D.C., Edwin Colburn, the Head of the Processing Department, with whom I had worked as Chief of the Book Repair Division, and who also had become one of Mr. Mumford's closest top level administrators announced that he too was resigning to take the position of Chief of Indexing Services at the Wilson Company. Ed's departure was scheduled during the 07month following that of Mr. Mumford. It occurred to me that if I were also to leave the Library, there would be no one there who had had any experience in the handling of book binding specifications, bidding process and contracts, which had always been a vital and very sensitive part of the Library's activities. Since Marjorie Ramisch, a Branch Librarian had just recently succeeded me as Head of the Book Repair Division was going to be needing

guidance and help in those areas

of expertise, she and the Library would be severely handicapped if both Ed Colburn and I were not around to assist in such matters. The Cleveland Public Library meant too much to me to leave at that time. So, I decided to stay put in Cleveland!



## Chapter 16. The Library's Seven Sisters Take Charge until the Advent of Raymond C. Lindquist as Director

When I called Mr. Mumford to express my thanks and regrets and told him my reason, he said, “I understand. I am sure that the Cleveland Public Library will appreciate your loyalty. Remember, Eddie, I’ll only be a phone call away. If you should ever change your mind and decide you wish to join me at Library Congress, call me!” It was at that point in time that I was propelled into what I would later describe as the perpetual motion of library administration.

During the Library Board meeting on August 9, 1954, a special personnel committee was appointed and charged to make a nationwide search for a new director. An Administrative Committee’ had been appointed earlier to administer the Library in the interim. It was composed of seven top level supervisors. They were **Emelia Wefel**, Head of the Main Library, **Jean Roos**, Head of the Youth Department, **Rose Vormelker**, Head of the Business Information Bureau, **Fern Long**, Head of the Adult Education Department, **Adeline Corrigan**, Head of the Children’s Department, **Helen Lewis**, Head of the School Department, and **Lorraine Slater**, Head of the Branch Department.

Emelia Wefel was appointed Chair of the Administrative Committee and Deputy Clerk Treasurer of the Library Board, Jean Roos, CoChair and Rose Vormelker, Secretary. When the committee began functioning on August 16, 1954, Miss Wefel left her office as Head of the Main Library and assumed her duties as the acting titular head of the Cleveland Public Library. She moved into the Director’s office. I became Acting Head of the Main Library. On that day, I knew that I had made the right decision when I decided not to accept Mr. Mumford’s invitation to join him at the Library of Congress. I was now back in the public service part of the library work where I wanted to be and with the responsibility of overseeing the reference and research activities of the twelve subject divisions in the Main Library. I had been tapped to play an important role at home.

On December 15, 1954, Raymond C. Lindquist, who had been the Director of the Cuyahoga County Public Library was appointed Director of the Cleveland Public Library by the Cleveland Library Board, with the provision that he take office on March 1, 1955. On his arrival, Miss Wefel returned to her’ position as Head of the Main Library and the other members of the Administrative Committee returned to their former positions, and of course, I resumed my position as Assistant Head of the Main Library.

The seven members of the Administrative Committee had done a remarkable job. They had become affectionately known among the entire staff as “The Seven Sisters” during that interim period that had covered almost seven months. During those seven months, I had gained invaluable administrative experience and had made the most of every minute even though they had been among the most demanding months of my young career. For those seven months while Miss Wefel had effectively and efficiently borne the administrative leadership role for the entire Library, I had directed the affairs of the Main Library. I had graduated from directing and supervising a non-professional staff of 34 in the Book Repair Division to being responsible for the needs and activities of a staff of about three hundred non-professional and professionals in the city’s Main Library. I had had my first taste of the pleasures, the satisfactions and, yes, even some of the heartache, stress and pain that occur in a leadership role in a large public service agency. I welcomed Miss Wefel back to the Main Library Office with open arms!

On September 21, 1955, the Library Board established the position of Assistant Director and appointed Rose Vormelker to that position as of November 1, 1955. At the same time they re-established the position of Business Manager. That position had ceased to exist when Clarence Metcalf was elevated from that position to the directorship in 1941. Mr. Lindquist was charged to write a job description for the job and to conduct a nationwide search for the most qualified person to fill the job. He was also instructed to consider candidates from within the Library.

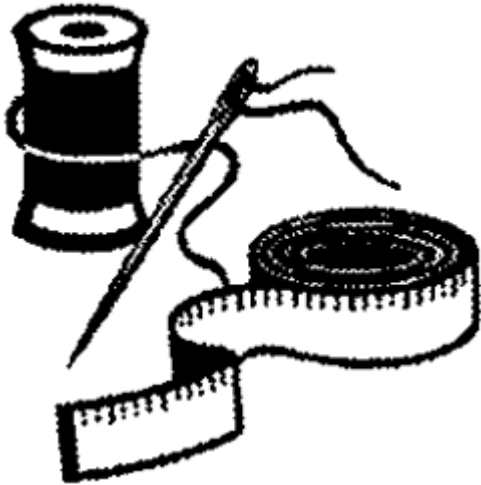
I recall reading the job description when it was published and was impressed by how much of the Library’s administrative functions that it covered, and recalled facetiously saying to one of my colleagues, “the person that fills this job is going to have to be a jack-of-all-trades and chief cook and bottle washer!” The description read as follows:

Under the general supervision of the Director. Assists with overall planning in all matters pertaining to the business and running of the Library, including help on legislative and budget matters, and all planning for building construction and space programs. To the Business Manager shall be delegated full charge of custodial operation and maintenance work, with supervision over the proposed Building Division, and the Printing Department, including supplies, shipping and delivery service, and all motor vehicles.

I can also recall a colleague saying to me, “Ed, are you going to apply for the job?” I laughed, and replied, “Are you kidding, that is no job for me. I wouldn’t stand a chance. The board is going to bring in some big shot from the outside! I like what I am doing now. I am back in public service where I belong.” With that I put the matter out of my mind.

Working with Emelia Wefel as her assistant in the Main Library was challenging and rewarding in so many ways. To begin with, it was professional library work. It brought me in contact with division chiefs who were authorities in their subject fields and interesting people. Serving as back-up for the divisions of the Main Library as they

served their clientele brought much satisfaction. It also brought me in contact with so many other interesting people. There were the general readers, the students, serious researchers and scholars who came to us in the Main Library Office when they had special needs or problems that could not be solved in the divisions. There were the fellow professionals in the colleges and the universities that we cooperated with, librarians, college professors, members of other professions, as well as the politicians of the metropolitan area. In one way or another, they beat a path to the Main Library Office door. I was having a great time just being Miss Wefel's assistant!



## Chapter 17. I Am Offered Another Major Library Job As I Mourn the Passing of My Parents

The end of October and the forepart of November of 1955 became a period of great sorrow for the family. As recorded earlier in this tale, Mother passed away suddenly on the evening of October 31. Father, having watched her die on that Halloween night, seeming to have lost all interest, followed her in death ten days later. This left a big void in all our lives. It was especially so for me because father and I had been confidants. I had always been able to seek his advice and counsel, particularly on matters pertaining to my career.

I was especially honored and surprised when I found that father had named me to serve as executor for his last will and testament. When attorney James Paduano advised me that Father had named me executor, I asked, “Why me? Why not brother Nick? After all he is the oldest son!” Mr. Paduano replied, “your father insisted that it be you!” I carried out my duties in that sad chore, taking care of every detail as carefully and as efficiently as I could. I paid all the bills, looked to the disposition of their physical possessions, making sure that my brothers received those items they wanted, saw to the sale of the parental home, etc. Attorney Paduano took care of the legal paperwork and shepherded it all through probate court. Father’s estate was small. Nevertheless, the resulting funds, after paying the attorney and court fees and other related bills, the funds were distributed equally to the penny! Although it had been a lot of tedious work, I felt a sense of satisfaction because, I had done one last chore for father! Some time afterwards, Mr. Paduano paid me a compliment on my service as father’s executor at a social gathering with family and friends at brother Nick’s home. He said, “I wish to commend brother Ed for doing all the leg work, and, by the way, he refused to take payment for his work as executor from the estate’s assets, as the law provides, so as not to diminish the funds to be distributed among the brothers.”

Not too long after father’s death, I had one of the biggest surprises of my” life. Around the end of November of 1955, Director Lindquist called me to his office for a conference with Miss Wefel and himself. When I arrived at his office, Miss Wefel was already there.

After the usual preliminary greetings and pleasantries, Mr. Lindquist turned to me and said, “Eddie, during our search for a Business Manager, we have been interviewing outside candidates, while at the same time considering those members of the staff who might be qualified to serve in that capacity. Your name has come up often in our administrative meetings. Miss Wefel and other department heads have spoken to me about the long and varied experience you have had in the Library and have given you high marks for the way you have performed in every

position you have held in your library career. I am prepared to offer you the job of Business Manager. How do you feel about it?"

I was thunderstruck! I sat there not believing what I was hearing. Here I was being offered one of the most important top level jobs in the Cleveland Public Library' only fifteen months after having been promoted to Assistant Head of the Main Library!

This was a big decision for me to make. All previous career decisions that I had had to make paled into insignificance when compared to this one! Here I was, again being asked to leave the public service front that I had insisted on and gotten back to only a year and a few months ago. I found myself repeating what I had said to Mr. Mumford some three years before when he asked me to go behind the scenes to the Book Repair Division. It was *deja vu* for me as I said, "Mr. Lindquist, I am a public service librarian. I find myself being just that as Miss Wefel's assistant in the Main Library. I have only' been back in that phase of work a little over a year, and I am not sure that I would be any good at being Business Manager."

Mr. Lindquist replied, "Miss Wefel and I think that you will be an excellent Business Manager because you have a great capacity for handling details and for following through on projects. In addition, your performance ratings have been superior in all the jobs you have held in this library from the day you started as a page on through your service as a reference assistant in the Sociology Division of the Main Library, to assistant branch librarian, to branch librarian in several branches, to Chief of the Book Repair Division, where I have found you showed excellent business acumen, and to your recent direction of the Main Library during the interim period when Miss Wefel directed the affairs of the entire Library system in the absence of a director." He finished by asking me to consider taking the job as another step in administrative experience, and to take a few days to make up my mind on the matter. Miss Wefel also urged me to consider the offer. She cautioned me that it would be a great mistake to reject it out-of hand. After all that, what could I say? So I said that I would take a week to think the matter over and then give them my answer. I left the director's office on that day in a real state of mental turmoil. I walked down the four flights of steps from that office to my office on the first floor of the Main Library with mixed emotions. I did not know whether I should be happy or unhappy at what had taken place. On one hand, I was happy that Mr. Lindquist had thought so much about my experience and qualifications to select me out of so many other staff members who were much older in years and who had longer tenure. I also kept telling myself, I should be considering this offer as the chance of a life time. I was being asked to work with the Director and the Assistant Director, to be a member of the triumvirate that would be administering the affairs of the second largest public library system in the United States! On the other hand, I was asking myself, did I really want to leave public service again. I knew that once I got into top administration, it would be difficult for me to ever go back into direct public service again. I was really on the horns of a dilemma. That was my state of mind as I drove home to consult with my Grace after work on that evening.

Grace was pleased and happy for me when I told her that I had been offered the new Business Manager's job. She said that she was proud and especially pleased that my abilities and performance were being recognized, however, she wanted to be sure that I would be happy in the business end of the library administration. I shall never forget her final words to me on the subject that evening. She said, "Ed, I realize that this would be a great promotion for you. The job undoubtedly will bring a larger income and status in the Library world and in our



community, however, I won't love you any less if you do not rise any higher professionally than you are in your present position. In fact, I would love you just as much if you had remained a reference librarian like you were when I first met you. Money and position don't mean that much to me!" That was my dear Grace.

That was that. Now it was up to me to make the final decision. This time, I did not have father to turn to for his point of view. I began asking myself, how would father advise me in this situation? This kind of thinking did not help me at all. I wrestled with the matter throughout the holiday with no success.

I returned to work on the day after the holiday no nearer to a decision than I had been before. Around about the middle of the morning, Miss Wefel came to me and asked if I had decided to accept the new job. I told her that I discussed it with Grace, however, I had not come to any conclusion as yet. She asked me if I had made any plans for lunch that day. I replied that I had not. Without any if and or buts, she said, "it is time that you and I had a good long lunch together!" She asked me where I would like to go for lunch? I suggested The Oak Room located in the lower concourse of the Union Terminal Building, which was one of my favorite restaurants in those days. That lunch in The Oak Room on that day after Thanksgiving of 1955 was a fateful lunch for me. After we had had a pleasant lunch, Miss Wefel cut to the chase by asking me why I was finding it so difficult in making a decision about accepting the job of Business Manager. I repeated the questions I had been asking myself. "First, was I ready to leave direct public service again so soon after having gotten back into it? Did I want to give it all up, and probably for good to involve myself in the business end of library work, something that I had not done before? After all would I be any good at it?"

Miss Wefel proceeded to answer each question in order. In answer to the first question, she said that I had shown that I was ready to leave direct public service when I took over the Book Repair Division and successfully put it on a businesslike basis in three years time, and it seemed like I had gotten a lot of satisfaction in doing it! Second, she thought that it was the right time in my career to leave public service for good because I was at the right age to break in to top level administration. She ended by saying that there was no question in her mind that I could handle the job of Business Manager because of the varied experience I had had in practically every aspect of the work in the Library.

After lunch, as Miss Wefel and I walked across the Public Square to the Library, she delivered the coup de grace, saying that I would be making the biggest mistake of my career if I should opt to turn the new job offer down. As we parted company, I thanked her for lunch and her advice and returned to my desk still not sure that I wanted to take the new job, even though I felt honored and proud of the fact that Miss Wefel, one of my most respected mentors felt that I was the best qualified for the job and was strongly urging me to take it. During the rest of that day, her warning that I would be making the biggest mistake of my career if I should reject the job of Business Manager unsettled me.

My thoughts turned to father and how he might have reacted to this latest turn of events in my career and what he might have said about it all. He had been gone not quite a month and here I was feeling the full impact of his absence. Oh! How I missed sitting at the kitchen table with him, getting his point of view on a multitude of matters!

That day, as I drove home from work, I decided to make a stop at father's grave at Holy Cross Cemetery, located

on Brookpark Road not too far from home. He rests there in a plot with mother under the watchful eye of the statue of Saint Anthony, who had been mother's patron saint. It was early evening. It was cold and crisp. I recall standing close to the statue of Saint Anthony, using it as a shield against the shivering cold wind that was doing a good job biting my cheeks, ears, nose and penetrating my heavily winter clad body. I stayed long enough to say a prayer, to tell mother and father how much I missed them and, yes, especially his wisdom. I must frankly confess that the tears that I shed on that cold wintry day were not only caused by sorrow but also by the bone chilling wind that was whipping through the cemetery at the time. That evening, Grace and I, again, discussed the pros and cons of the job offer, that is, how nice it would be to have more salary, etc., as opposed to giving up professional library work for the Business Manager's hat, and the headaches that might go with it, etc., etc. She kept repeating what she had told me so many times before, that she would support whatever decision I made. The problem was still unresolved when we went to bed that night!

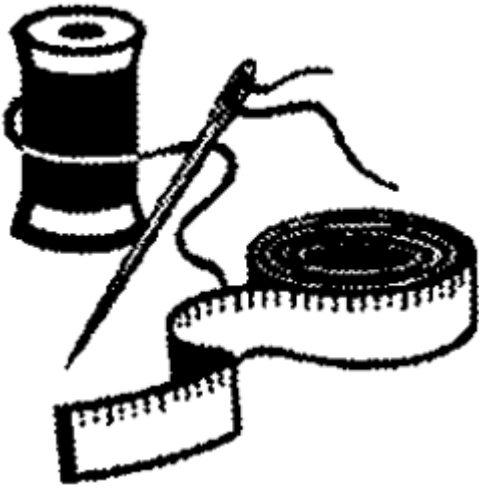
The following morning, I received a call from the Director's secretary who said that Mr. Lindquist wanted me to come to the office right away. Before leaving the Main Library office, I popped into Miss Wefel's office momentarily to tell her that I had been summoned by the Director. She said seven words loudly and with great emphasis. They were: "Go! Take the job, he needs you!" Those seven words were still ringing in my ears, as Catherine Addis ushered me into the Director's office.

Mr. Lindquist advised me that he had to make his recommendation for Business Manager in writing to the Personnel Committee of the Library board by December 1. Mr. Lindquist continued saying, "Eddie, I need to have your answer about the Business Manager's position right away! I have to get my recommendations to the Personnel Committee of the Library Board this week in order to give the committee time to consider it before presenting it to the full board for a vote in the next Board Meeting scheduled for December 21."

I was on the spot! I had to tell him, Yes or No, then and there. Miss Wefel's words. "Go! Take the job, he needs you," were haunting me. The way they had been hurled at me hit the right chord. I found myself saying, "I will take the job and I will try to do my best for you in the job!" Mr. Lindquist shook my hand as he thanked me saying, "You won't be sorry." I left his office that day, saying to myself, "I hope that I won't be sorry!"

I returned to Miss Wefel's office to tell her that I had accepted the job. She warmly congratulated me, simply saying. "I am glad you took my advice!" I spent the rest of the day trying to keep my mind on my work. It was real difficult to do so. My alter ego kept saying over and over, "are you sure you did the right thing? Are you sure you did thd right thing?" As I drove home that night, I wondered what Grace would say" when I told her what I had done. I also wondered how father would have reacted to my decision and the manner in which I had made it!

Grace surprised me when I told her that I had accepted the new job. She said that I had not made a mistake by following Miss Wefel's "order," that she trusted Miss Wefel's judgment. Grace's interpretation of Miss Wefel's, "Go! Take the job, he needs you," as an order, caused me to laugh, and in doing so brought me to a lighter mental plane as Grace always managed to do for me whenever I became bogged down with a matter or problem. Without mincing any words, Grace had given me the reassurance that I needed that evening.



## Chapter 18. Newspaper Leak Holds up My Appointment as Business Manager of the Cleveland Public Library

On December 21, 1955, Doctor Charles Garvin, Chairman of the Personnel Committee of the Library Board, read a statement nominating me for the position of Business Manager, followed by a brief biography of me. He then moved that my appointment be accepted.

At that point, Board member Stanley Klonowski asked that no action be taken on the motion at that time because one Board member was absent. He went on to say that he thought that it would be better to call a special meeting on the matter or wait until the January meeting, when all the Board members would be present.

Mr. Klonowski added that he was “disappointed and disturbed that the Cleveland Press had published an article that afternoon announcing Mr. D’Alessandro’s appointment as Business Manager.” He continued saying that he felt, “that newspapers should not announce actions of the Board until they actually had been taken!”

The Board members present agreed with Mr. Klonowski and voted to postpone my appointment until the January meeting. Naturally there was speculation as who might have leaked the news of the impending possibility of my appointment as Business Manager to the Cleveland Press. The morning after the Board meeting, Mrs. Addis telephoned to tell me that Mr. Lindquist wanted me to join him in a meeting with Dr. Garvin, chairman of the Personnel Committee of the Library Board immediately.

I walked into the Director’s office and found a solemn looking Dr. Garvin and a glum looking Director Lindquist. I was shocked, hurt and offended when without any preamble of any kind, Dr. Garvin asked me whether I had alerted the Cleveland Press that I was to be appointed Business Manager? As I look back and recall that moment in time, although I was shaking with anger within, to the very core of my being, I managed to keep my cool. Feeling that they suspected

me of something that I had not done, nor would have ever thought of doing, I said calmly, “No, I did not! I am sorry that you both think that I might be the kind of person that would do such a thing. If that is the case, I am now requesting that you remove my name from consideration for the position of Business Manager!”

I shall never forget the reaction of those two men on that fateful morning. As I said, “No, I did not,” Mr. Lindquist seemed to sigh with relief. However, as I said that I wanted my name removed from consideration for the job, he got a worried look on his face. Dr. Garvin, on the other hand, chuckled, and said kindly, “there is no need for

such drastic action, young man! We believe you had nothing to do with the unfortunate news leak!” With this statement, Mr. Lindquist beamed and added his assurance that he too felt that I was not responsible for the news leak. From that day on Dr. Garvin was tops in my book. After all, he had not only managed to defuse the situation, but also had called me a young man! I was forty-two years old at the time. As I took my leave, Dr. Garvin said that he had every intention of presenting my appointment to the full Board in the January meeting. I thanked him and left.

When I returned to my desk in the Main Library Office, Miss Wefel was waiting for me, curious as to what had transpired in my meeting with Dr. Garvin and the Director. When I told her the details, she shook her head and gently scolded me for having told the two men that I wanted my name removed from consideration. She was a wise and grand lady!

Not long after that unforgettable meeting, we learned who had been responsible for that news leak. It turned out to be a male employee who was a member of the Library Union (AFSCME), who managed in some mysterious manner to learn about my proposed appointment and telephoned it to Noal Wical, who at that time covered and reported Library news at the Cleveland Press. Mr. Wical had always complained that since the Board meetings at that time were held at 7:30 in the evening, The Plain Dealer always had our news first for its morning edition, so he had finally made a contact on the staff for news leaks.

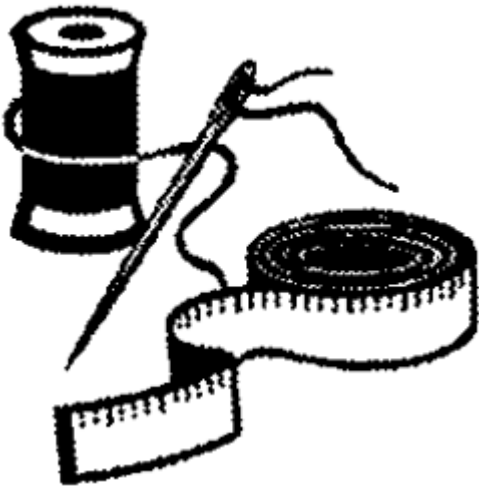
On January 18, 1956 when the Library Board met again, Doctor Garvin as the Chairman of the Personnel Committee noted that since all the board members were present that it was time to re-introduce his December motion recommending my promotion as Business Manager of the Library System. He moved that my appointment be approved, to be effective January 23, 1956. Board member George Callahan seconded the motion. The seven members of the Board voted unanimously to approve my appointment. So it was in January of 1956, I was catapulted into the position that was going to be one of the most challenging and demanding of my Library career!

Within six months of my appointment as Business Manager, I was asked to assume additional administrative responsibilities. During the course of the June 20, 1956 Board Meeting, Doctor Garvin read the following recommendation:

Article XII of the Regulations of the Board of Trustees provides that no disbursement shall be made except upon a voucher approved by the President, Director, and Clerk. During portions of the months of June and July and possibly at later times, both the Director and the Assistant Director will be absent from the Library. Technically this would stop disbursements being made during such intervals. To remedy such a situation, it is recommended that the position of Acting Assistant Director be established to function during the absence for both the Director and the Assistant Director.

Doctor Garvin then moved that the position of Acting Assistant Director be established sans salary. Board Member Henry Schneider seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A second motion by Doctor Garvin proposed that I be appointed Acting Assistant Director, sans salary for that position because I was drawing a salary as Business Manager. George Callahan seconded the motion, and the Board approved the motion

unanimously. I now had earned the distinction of being the Library employee who was to wear two administrative hats for twelve of some of the most productive years in the Library's history, during the development of new library services and the renovation and expansion of the Library's physical plant.



## Chapter 19. The Expansion of the Library's Physical Plant and its Services

Although only thirty-one years old, the Main Library Building had been bulging at the seams for a number of years. I recall discussions during the administrations of Charles Rush and Clarence Metcalf about the possibility of securing the neighboring building to the west, the old Post Office Building to serve as a Main Library Annex. The need was raised again during L. Quincy Mumford's time. The Library Boards during those directorships did not have some one like Marjorie Damison as President.

By July 1956, Mrs. Marjorie Damison, who was the wife of Robert Damison, who coincidentally also had been President of the Cleveland City School District School Board earlier, had assumed strong leadership role not only as an active citizen of the city of Cleveland, but also as a dynamic leader of the Library Board. She began the July Library Board meeting by announcing that she had met with the School Board and had read her letter of July 16 to that board regarding the need for floating a bond issue to purchase the vacant Plain Dealer Building, our neighbor at the corner of East Sixth Street, to relieve the over crowded conditions of the Main Library Building. She reported that the School Board as the Library's parent body and taxing authority had unanimously voted approval of the Library's request for a \$3,000,000 bond issue, thus clearing the way for its submission to the voters in a subsequent election.

In my position of Business Manager, I found myself working closely with Mrs. Damison and the Building and Finance Committees of the Library Board and so became deeply involved in every detail of the planning for and the actual acquisition and remodeling of the Plain Dealer Building. It was not to be an easy matter. I found myself doing much of the legwork and paperwork connected with the project, the latter required many nights of burning the midnight oil. We had to overcome many obstacles before the building finally became the Main Library's Annex.

Initially all appeared to go smoothly. Mrs. Jamison's leadership, drive and political contacts were awesome, she had managed to get the Cleveland School Board to accept and approve our resolution for a Bond Issue for \$3,000,000 to purchase, remodel and furnish the Plain Dealer to the east of our Main Library. She had gotten Sterling E. Graham, Chairman of the Board of the Forest City Publishing Company to agree to sell the Plain Dealer Building to the Library for \$2,100,000, all by the time that the Library Board met on July 24, 1956. But then our problems began.

During the course of the July 24th Board Meeting, we had the sad task of informing the Board that Mr. Sterling Graham had informed us that the Forest City Publishing Company did not own a twenty foot strip of land under the westerly portion of the Plain Dealer Building between Superior and Rockwell Avenues, that it was held on a 99 year lease, dating from August 1, 1919, at a rental of \$6,400 a year for the balance of the term of the lease, the lessor being the E W. Gehring Family.

The Board was advised that if it wanted to continue with the purchase, it had the choice of either taking over the expired lease or having the strip condemned and buying the land under eminent domain. This was a problem that the Finance Committee was asked to wrestle with and come back with a recommendation at the next meeting.

During the next meeting on August 29, 1956, there was considerable discussion of the twenty foot strip lease and the total purchase price of the building and the land. The Finance Committee decided that we should go back to negotiate with Mr. Graham, which she and I did. Mrs. Jamison, I recall was magnificent with Mr. Graham, getting him to agree to go back to his board to see if that board would agree to purchase the twenty foot strip and so be able to sell the total property free and clear of any encumbrance to the Library.

While this was going on another problem surfaced. The Board of Education reneged on its promise to place the Library's Building Bond Issue on the ballot in the forthcoming November election when it adopted the following resolution in its meeting of September 4, 1956:

“Be it resolved that the Board of Education rescind its resolution (Res. No. 28113 determining to proceed

The Library's Physical Plant 131 with election) adopted on August 7, 1956, and notify the Board of Elections, thereof, and direct the Board of Elections not to place the issue on the ballot.” The resolution was signed by Michael Wach, Clerk Treasurer of the School Board. The reason given being that the Library's Bond Issue might jeopardize the passage of its own operating levy that was to appear on the ballot at the same time.

This was shocking news and a major setback in our planning. This however, did not stop us from proceeding with our negotiations with Sterling Graham and the Board of the Forest City Publishing Company. By the time that the Library Board met again on November 28, 1956, we were able to report that the Forest City Publishing Company had agreed to negotiate its asking price downward if it developed that the Library Board would have to take over the lease of the westerly twenty foot strip under the Plain Dealer and its rental cost. We had also gotten Sterling Graham and his board to consider keeping the Plain Dealer on the market for us until the next regular election if it were not possible to get the School Board to place it on the ballot in the next special election on January 21, 1957. In the meantime, we had also sought and received an informed written opinion from the City Law Department on library bond issues and levies to make sure we could not be thwarted again by the School Board in our next attempt to place the bond issue on the ballot so we could proceed with the purchase of The Plain Dealer Building in 1957.

In the Board Meeting of April 17, 1957, we were able to report that the opinion received from the City Law Department held that whenever the Library Board requests the Board of Education by resolution to submit a bond



issue or levy, it is mandatory for the School Board to submit the issue to the electorate at the next general election unless the Board of Education is at the statutory limit of its bonded indebtedness. We were now armed and ready with the law for our next attempt to get our issue on the ballot.

Sterling Graham and Sidney Jackson, attorney from the Forest City Publishing Company, were invited to May 21, 1957 Library Board meeting, at which time, Mr. Jackson advised the board that the lease on the westerly twenty foot strip of land held with the Gehring family could be legally transferred to the Library at the existing annual rental of \$6,400 plus taxes amounting to \$1,000 a year. Mr. Graham completed the good news when he added that the Forest City Publishing Company had agreed to sell The Plain Dealer Building and the rest of the land on which it rested at the Library's last offer of \$1,600,000.

At this point, the first and only objection to purchase the building by a Library Board member was voiced by Stanley Klonowski, who maintained that the Library did not need the additional building. He advised that the board should proceed with caution. The board noted his caution and proceeded to discuss the financing. Their initial thinking being that if the bond issue were for \$3,000,000, it would provide for the \$1,600,000 to purchase the building, that \$1,200,000 could be for building alterations and furnishings, and a tunnel to connect the resulting annex to the Main Library Building, which would leave \$200,000 to invest in tax exempt Government bonds that could yield the \$6,400 and the \$1,000 for the taxes for the twenty foot strip of land to be leased. All the while, we were writing a rough draft of a resolution for the bond issue to go to the School Board. Since we had run out of time, the Library board recessed the meeting until the next day', May 22, to finalize the financing plans and to act on our resolution, all for review by Andrew Sarisky of the City Law Department who had been asked to attend the meeting.

On May 22, 1957, The Library Board reconvened at 9:00 P.M. After much discussion and on Mr. Sarisky's advice, the Board changed it thinking on the financing of the Plain Dealer Building's leased westerly twenty foot strip of land. He advised that it would be better to pay the annual rent and taxes for the land from operating funds rather than from any funds from the bond issue. As a result the Board passed the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland City School District Public Library, that it is hereby determined to be necessary, in order to provide adequate free library service, to acquire a building and premises owned by the Forest City Publishing Company at the north westerly corner of Superior Avenue and East 6th Street together with the lease held by the Forest City Publishing Company as lessee on a portion of the land on which said building is situated, being the western most 20 feet of said land, and provide the means to remodel, equip, and furnish the same for library purposes, including the provision of an underground or surface passageway connection with the present Main Library Building as may be required to accomplish the same; that for such purposes it is necessary to issue bonds in an amount now estimated at \$3,000,000 issuance of such bonds. Be it further resolved that the Board of Education of the Cleveland

City School District be and is hereby requested to submit the aforesaid bond issue and the levy of a tax outside of the limitations to pay the interest on and to retire such bonds at the regular election to be held in said school district on the 5th day of November, 1957, and if said election is successful, thereupon to issue such bonds and notes in anticipation hereof under and pursuant

to the provisions of Section 133.01 to 133.65 of the Revised Code and of the pertinent provisions of Article XII of the Ohio Constitution, this request being made pursuant to Section 33 75.43 of the Revised Code of Ohio; and that the Clerk of this Board be and he is hereby directed to certify a copy of this resolution forthwith to the Board of the Cleveland City School District.

The record shows that the resolution passed with six yeas and one nay. The nay vote was cast by Stanley Klonowski, who in so doing read the following statement into the record:

The reasons for my negative vote on the purchase of The Plain Dealer Building are as follows:

1. *The present Main Library Building contains more than enough space for all its operations.*
2. *A large space of said library building is used for a restaurant and two large public meeting rooms, which could be used for library services.*
3. *The Cleveland Library System has thirty-eight branches, partially occupied.*
4. *The free space in the branches can be used for the main Library surplus.*

There is no reason to waste three million dollars of taxpayer's money. hereby request this statement be recorded in the minutes of this meeting. Respectfully submitted./s/Stanley J. Klonowski

The Board accepted Mr. Klonowski's statement for the record and then proceeded to vote the following resolution:

Be it resolved that The Plain Dealer Building sale offer of the Forest City Publishing Company be approved and accepted subject to the authorization of a bond issue for the purpose of purchasing and improving said building which is to be submitted to the electors of the Cleveland City School District in the November General Election of 1957. Be it further resolved that the Board of Education of the Cleveland City School District be requested to submit the question of a bond issue to purchase and improve said building at the November 1957 general election in order that an unconditional acceptance or rejection of the offer of the Forest City Publishing Company may" be made on or before November 15, 1957, the expiration date of the offer.

This resolution was passed with six yeas and one nay. The one negative vote again was cast by Stanley Klonowski. This time the Board of Education followed through, and placed the bond issue on the ballot. We were finally on the way to getting the former Plain Dealer Building.

The entire Library staff rolled up its collective sleeves and put on a marvelous campaign to convince the voters to approve the \$3,000,000 bond issue. We were successful! Although Director Lindquist and I as Business Manager with the close support of Mrs. damison and the rest of the Board spent many hours after work campaigning. A great deal of credit for getting the votes required must go to people like Rose Vormelker, Emelia Wefel, Varelia Farmer, Adeline Corrigan, Fern Long, Loraine Slater in their administrative capacities, and Branch Librarians like Catherine Graves, Margery Ramisch, Hilda Miller and so many others too numerous to mention.

On November 5, 1957, the electors of the Cleveland City School District by a majority of 66 percent approved

the bond issue, which was well above the 55 percent required, thereby providing for the acquisition of The Plain Dealer Building and its renovation and equipping it as a much needed annex for the Main Library. This was the library's first bond issue in thirty-five years. I recall that in our bidding process that it only cost the library 2.66 percent to retire the bonds over a period of fifteen years, which was the lowest interest rate for any local municipal issue in years.



## Chapter 20. First Thoughts on Taking Possession of an Old Empty Newspaper Building

The Library Board acted quickly. On November 11, it passed the enabling resolution for the purchase of the building and its creation as a library annex. Once again the only negative vote was cast by Stanley Klonowski. Nine days later, on November 20, Architect Charles Bacon Rowley was retained to plan the building renovation and to plan the construction of the tunnel under Eastman park to connect the annex to the Main Library Building. The Board simultaneously requested a permanent easement from the City of Cleveland along with permission to close the park during the time the tunnel would be in construction and The Plain Dealer Building was being renovated as a Library Building.

The building purchase was consummated quickly. As Business Manager, I had the pleasure of picking up the keys and the original Plain Dealer Building plans and other pertinent documents from my counterpart at The Plain Dealer's new Quarters at East 18th and Superior Avenue in June of 1958. With this action, the conversion of that building into a library annex became the main object of my life.

As soon as I had the keys in hand, I lost no time making my first tour of inspection of the vacated Plain Dealer Building. I was shocked! I was not prepared for what I saw. I saw a vacant building in shambles. The first and only time I had seen it was when it had been furnished and equipped, as a full functioning newspaper building. Furniture and equipment has a way of covering the flaws and defects of a building.

I checked out every part of the building from top to bottom. I made it my business to inspect every nook and cranny. I saw large and small rooms that were not only filthy but also showed evidence of poor or lack of maintenance over the years. The condition of what was formerly the City Room, the huge linotype rooms with their steel plated floors appeared cavernous and ugly, the ink and paper storage rooms showed that they had not seen much cleaning, let alone any maintenance at any time. Plaster was falling from ceilings and walls due to water seepage and roof leaks. The basement areas were damp and catacomb-like.

When I had finished my inspection and locked the doors of our newly acquired building, I walked slowly next door to my office in the Main Library Building. Walking into that beautiful building, gleaming from its cleanliness and excellent maintenance and upkeep, I shuddered as I recollected the utter neglect and disrepair that I had discovered in our recently purchased real estate.

I luckily found my way to my office on the fourth floor of the Main Library without meeting any of my associates. I say luckily because in my saddened state I am afraid I might have said something about our recent purchase that I would have regretted. I had decided that I would sequester myself in my office for at least an hour before reporting my findings and thoughts about The Plain Dealer Building to Director Lindquist.

I locked my office door and sat at my desk, head in hands, with one question running through my mind. I kept thinking how in the world will we ever be able to make that awful building into a library building?

After a while, the solitude in my office enabled me to calm down and I found myself thinking about father and what his advice might be for me about this situation. I remembered that he used to say that when one has committed oneself to undertake an assignment one is obligated to see it through to its successful completion, however those were not the words he used. He put it this way, “when one begins to dance, he must complete the dance!” As I recalled those words, I got up from my chair and went to Mr. Lindquist’s office knowing that my report to him would be made in a positive manner.

When I met with Mr. Lindquist, my report was brief and to the point, devoid of any feelings of doubt about being able to convert The Plain Dealer Building into a suitable Library Annex. I presented a factual description of what I had seen in the empty building, and advised him that I thought that it would be wise to schedule a tour of the building for the Library Board as soon as possible. He agreed and asked me to draw up a rough plan that would show the Board what divisions and functions of the Library might be moved into the Annex and where each might be located in the building before we scheduled a tour for them. He asked that I present it to him within the week, so that we could finalize it before presenting it to the Board at tour time. I left the director’s office that day realizing that my work was cut out for me, that I would be burning the midnight oil for many a night before this project would be finished. We managed to get the rough plans finalized. And we did manage to present them as we toured the Board through The Plain Dealer Building before the next board meeting. All members of the Board except for Mr. Klonowski joined in the tour and approved our rough plans.

The Board met on June 18, 1958 and gave authorization to advertise for bids for the general remodeling of the Annex Building as they began calling the newly acquired building. They authorized that bids be sought for general contract work, electrical, plumbing, heating and ventilating. Advertisements for book stacks, other required shelving, auditorium seating, other furniture and equipment, and contract work to construct the tunnel under the Eastman Park to Connect the Annex to the Main Library Building were to be made later.

According to state law we were required to advertise one day each week for four successive weeks in the daily newspapers. I can recall writing and rewriting those ads to make sure that no vital information was left out. The ads appeared in the July 11, 18, 25, and August 5, 1958 papers.



## Chapter 21. The Library Relinquishes its Responsibility For School Library Service as it Begins its Building Program

The Board met on August 13, 1958 and awarded the general contract to William Passalacqua, Inc. for the low bid of \$367,600 as the lowest, responsible bidder. The electrical contract was awarded to Lake Erie Electric, Inc. as the lowest responsible bidder at \$146,900. The plumbing, heating and ventilating contract went to Lighthouse Inc. at the lowest and responsible bid of \$170,000. We were now really on the way to making a Library Annex out of an old newspaper building.

I was now to experience my baptism under fire as it were in the responsibilities of the Office of Business Manager of a large public library that was beginning an intense period of building renovation and construction downtown, and in its system of branch libraries.

With the advent of the school year, the Library Board became involved in a difficult situation with its parent body, the School Board, over library service in the schools. The Cuyahoga County Budget Commission had informed the Library Board that it no longer could legally underwrite the cost of operating the libraries in the Cleveland Public Schools with intangible tax funds as long as the School Board was fiscally able to support and operate those libraries itself. According to a decision of the Ohio Supreme Court, it was reasonable and logical to interpret the statute as meaning that when a Board of Education can afford to pay all of the expenses, it should do so, and when it could afford to pay only part of the expenses, such part should be ascertained on the basis of its ability to pay as determined by the taxable resources of the community which it serves. Mrs. Jamison, opened the Library Board meeting of September 9, 1958 with the following statement:

The Board of Education by its own statement to the newspapers anticipates a surplus of \$1,193,921 at the end of the year. In other words, a contract should be made to provide library service to the schools on a businesslike basis.

As a result, the Library Board informed the Board of Education that it could not continue to offer school library service legally until a definite contract providing remuneration was signed by both boards.

This of course came as a big surprise to the School Board and caused its administration some consternation

because the Cleveland Public Library had been carrying most of the cost of school library service from the time of inception. Superintendent of Schools, Paul Briggs and Michael Wach, Clerk Treasurer of the School Board called for a meeting to discuss the matter. They suggested that the meeting be held over lunch at Guarino's Restaurant in Little Italy.

Director Lindquist asked me as the Library's Business Manager to join him at the meeting. Within a short time, we met at Guarino's Restaurant on Murray Hill for a working/lunch meeting. As I recall it, Ed Smircina, the School Systems Business manager was there with Superintendent Briggs and Mike Wach, his Clerk-Treasurer. After lunch, Mr. Briggs began the discussion by indicating the difficulties that the school system would face having to absorb additional costs to run the school libraries and asked Mr. Wach to explain that the surplus noted earlier in the newspapers had been committed to other budgetary needs, that it would be a fiscal impossibility to absorb any more of the costs of the school library system at that time.

Director Lindquist replied that the Library had been advised by John T. Corrigan, the Library's legal counsel that there was no option, that the Library must enter into a bonafide contract with the School Board wherein that board would be paying for school library service according to its real means. Mr. Briggs asked whether there was a deadline. Mr. Lindquist advised him that Mr. Corrigan had said, "without delay."

Mr. Briggs then pressing Mr. Lindquist, insisted that the Library could and should find an alternative solution to the problem. Mr. Lindquist replied that there was no alternative that the Library Board had decided in its last board meeting that since it could not legally do so, it would not offer to continue school library service until the School Board signed a contract agreeing to pay according to its ability to pay all or part of the cost of the service.

At this, Mr. Briggs said that since the Library was not willing to find an alternative solution to the problem that he would advise the School Board not to approve the Library's next budget request and not submit it to the Cuyahoga County Budget Commission.

At that point, I felt impelled to address that course of action. With all due respect, I gently advised Mr. Briggs that although according to Ohio Law, the School Board, as the parent body, appointed the Library Board, it did not have the legal power to do what he was threatening to do. I added that according to the law, the School Board could not add to or reduce the Library's budget or refuse to transmit it to the Budget Commission, that it merely served as the transmittal agency for the Library. The meeting ended at an impasse.

The School Board shortly after that fateful meeting agreed to a businesslike contract wherein it agreed to share the costs of school library service according to its means, and was billed accordingly. The School Board initially closed some school libraries. Eventually it took over the operation of the school libraries entirely in the late sixties.

Several years later it became obvious that the schools administration had harbored ill feelings toward the Library and had turned the School Board, not only against the Library Board, and its administration, but especially against Ray Lindquist and me. I will elaborate on that later.

At the same time, although we had our hands full making the, old Plain Dealer Building into a library annex, it



was decided that it was time to do something about the replacement of the Woodland Branch Library that had been destroyed by fire in November of 1957.

This matter was brought before the Library Board on September 17, 1958. As the matter was being discussed, I could not help recalling that wintry night—November 22, 1957, being telephoned at home by the fire department at 10:00 P.M. and told that the branch library at 5806 Woodland Avenue was burning. It is a night that I will never forget. I remember speeding from my home in West Park. I became aware of the extent and the seriousness of the fire as I drove through what is now the Gateway area into lower Woodland Avenue. At that point, I was able to see that the sky was fiery red and filled with smoke. When I arrived at the site, I learned from the firemen that the fire had already become a five alarm fire. The fire at first seemed localized in the rear of the building, the auditorium part. The firemen were concentrating on that part and their hoses were spewing torrents of water through side doors of that area. I began to yell at the firemen urging them to start pouring water on the roof areas of the front and middle parts of the building to prevent the fire from spreading to those parts because that is where the book collections were housed. The firemen smiled and told me to talk to the man in the white raincoat, the chief. By the time I was able to get his attention, the flames had already spread across to those roof areas from the auditorium roof. Although the chief got the hook and ladder unit pouring water onto those areas, it was too late. The burning flat tar and gravel roofs were caving into all areas of the building, including the book areas. In later years I have often thought that it must have been awfully nervy of me to presume to tell the fire chief how to fight the fire.

I must say, however that I have never faulted the chief or the firemen because they did fight hard to save the building. They were also fighting the elements that night. It was freezing cold and the water virtually froze into huge icicles as it hit the roof areas.

On that night I watched a beautiful Carnegie Building that had been opened for service on July 16, 1904, a library that had been my first assignment in the early 1940's as a Branch Librarian, one that I had administered until I left for World War II military service, die. I remained there until three o'clock in the morning on that frigid day, weeping as I watched the firemen finally put out the last flame. In the end, all that was left were the exterior walls. The fire investigators concluded that it was arson, however, no perpetrator or perpetrators were ever found. The books were not destroyed by fire but by the tons of water that had been poured into the building. They were a total loss. At the time the freeze-dry book saving methods we have today were not available for book restoration. Watching the destruction of that branch library building that night left me emotionally wounded.

In 1941 as its youthful head, I had fought to save that branch library from neighborhood hoodlums. In October of 1941, against my better judgment, I had allowed Director Clarence Metcalf convince me to leave my position as Assistant Branch Librarian at the Euclid-100th Branch Library to take over the Woodland Branch Library as its Branch Librarian when Margaret Kelly retired after having been there for many years. Apparently in the last few years she was there, she had lost control of the branch during the evening hours. A group of teenagers had made it impossible for Miss Kelly to maintain discipline, and the kind of atmosphere conducive to reading and study. From 6:00 P.M. on every evening the young hoodlums would turn the branch library into a place that resembled a hangout for incorrigibles. As a result the Library's regular readers, those who wanted to read and study, no longer used the library. It had not only become a social club for hoodlums, but also a market place for marihuana reefers. After having been there for only one month, I knew that something drastic had to be done. I advised Mr. Metcalf

that I was not about to stay in a place that was no longer being used as a library, that if it was to be saved I had to have police help! At first Mr. Metcalf, shocked and in disbelief was reluctant to go the police route. He changed his mind when I said that I would resign rather than continue to work under the insufferable conditions that existed at the Woodland Branch. He asked me to join him in a special Board meeting that was called to present the problem and to seek the board's approval to take the police route.

I had advised Mr. Metcalf that I would like permission to go to Mr. Frank Celebrezze, who was Safety Director of the City of Cleveland, and who was a family friend to ask him to assign some police to help me rid the branch of the trouble makers. At the appropriate time in the board's agenda under New Business, Mr. Metcalf asked me to describe the situation at the Woodland Branch to the members of the Library Board and to present my request. Never having appeared before the Library Board, I recall being so nervous that my voice shook as I began to speak. I had not counted on finding myself addressing not only the seven library board members but also a room filled with newspaper and radio reporters, members of the public and library staff members! I managed to compose myself after I had gotten warmed up to my subject, and somehow managed to convey my deep concern for the future of the branch Library if the hoodlums were allowed to continue using the library.

The initial reaction of the board members was similar to Mr. Metcalf's first reaction to my report. Some of the members wondered whether I was not over reacting and seemed to be leaning toward asking me to give the situation more time to right itself. One board member, Doctor Charles Garvin, who at the time was the chairman of the Library Extension Committee, the committee having jurisdiction over matters pertaining to the system's branch libraries, asked me if I thought that the situation was dangerous to the staff and the public generally. Lip until that moment, I had thought it the better part of valor not to mention the fact that I had been threatened by some of the hoodlums in several attempts to get them to leave the library, that there had also been an incident that I had mistakenly thought it wise not to publicize when it had happened. I had only been at the branch two weeks when, I had been able to thwart one young hoodlum's attempt to choke a woman staff member. On that day around about 2:00 P.M. on returning from a meeting with the Supervisor of Branch Libraries at the Main Library, I entered the branch in time to see a young teenager trying to put his hands around the staff member's neck. I had been able to get to her aid in time! He fled when he saw me coming.

Doctor Garvin's question convinced me to reveal the personal threats made to me and the choking incident. At that Doctor Garvin asked me how I personally felt about the Woodland Branch, and if I thought that bringing in the police was really the only way to go. Looking back in time and recalling my reply to him at the time makes me wonder at the recklessness of my response. There I was twenty-eight years old, the youngest and the only man branch librarian in the Cleveland system, out of graduate library school only three years, telling the chairman of the Library Extension Committee and his fellow board members that, "the Woodland Branch Library was no longer a library, that it was just a hangout for a bunch of bums, that if the police were not brought in to rid it of the bums, that the branch ought to be closed. It was no longer serving the decent people of the community, that I could not see myself continuing to work there."

That did it! Dr. Garvin reacted favorably to my response and convinced the board to give me the permission I needed to seek help from the city's Safety Director's Office. Needless to say, I lost no time in seeing Frank Celebrezze. Without delay, he assigned two officers in plain clothes, detectives, a great hulk of a man named John

Jones and a very forceful woman detective Nell Hackney. For the period of about six weeks they would come into the branch around 6:00 P.M. and stay with me until closing time. As the trouble makers came in I would point them out. One by one they would collar them and escort them out, reading them the riot act as they did. That did the trick! The Woodland Branch became a library again. Until the day that I left the library to go into military service there were no more hoodlums! This recollection of my beginning as a branch librarian at the Woodland Branch will help my readers understand my special feelings for that particular library the night it burned.

When it came to rebuilding the branch, it was estimated that \$200,000 was needed to replace the Woodland Branch and the Board was advised that funds were available in the Library's self insurance fund which at that time totaled \$421,694.94. The Board concluded its September 17, 1958 meeting by appointing a committee to study whether to rebuild on the old site or elsewhere and to investigate possible architects to prepare building plans, etc. The committee was charged to bring its recommendations back for consideration later in the Fall. The committee eventually recommended and the Board agreed to rebuild on the old site transferring \$250,000 from the self insurance fund to the Building Improvement and Repair. Fund to be used for the rebuilding of the Branch Library.

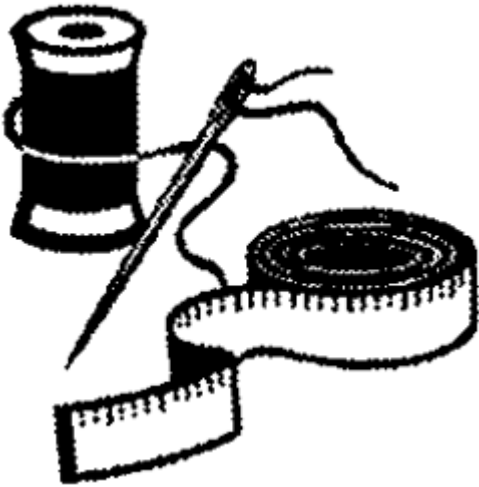
A short time later, the Board approved proceeding with negotiations with the City of Cleveland to acquire the Eastman Park. On February 18, 1959, Mrs. Damison asked me to accompany her to a meeting in the City Council Chambers at City Hall to present the matter. It was the first time that I had ever been in that beautiful and inspiring room, and of course the first time that I had come face to face with members of the Council and its president. Bronis Klementowicz was its young and feisty president at the time. Mrs. Damison made the initial presentation, indicating the Library's desire to take over the park and to convert it into an outdoor reading garden. She ended her appeal by saying that I was present, and as the Library's Business Manager, was available to answer any questions about how the Library would take care of the property. During Mrs. Damison's statement, the council members present and Mr. Klementowicz had listened quietly and respectfully, however, Mr. Klementowicz subjected me to an intense grilling. Mr. Klementowicz was very pointed in questioning me. He wanted to know how the Library planned to convert the park into a reading garden? What assurance would the City have that the Library would be able to take care of it properly? Mr. Klementowicz asked what made me think the Library could do a better job of maintaining the park than the City? Carefully and tactfully selecting my words, I advised Mr. Klementowicz and the members of the City Council that we planned to improve the park in its architecture and landscaping, that we had plans to enclose it with architecturally pleasing wrought iron fences and gates at the Superior and Rockwell Avenue sides, that entry would be made from a doorway that would be built in the Annex wall in place of a large window that existed there. In this way we would be able to provide security and the proper use of the park as a real outdoor reading garden, and make sure that the park would no longer be a hangout for the bums who had been frequenting the park as a place to drink their booze and sleep.

I informed him that we hoped to make it an oasis in downtown Cleveland that the city could be proud of, where its citizens, the people who worked in the area and visitors could read or rest, could bring their lunches at the noon hour, and listen to some quiet music, which we hoped to pipe in from the Annex auditorium control room each day during the months of May through the early Fall's days of good weather. I also assured him that we had the required maintenance staff to maintain the park in continuing good order. Mr. Klementowicz was adamant and continued to be very reluctant to agree to our request, citing the fact that in 1937 when the City had named the

park in honor of Linda A. Eastman, the Library had equipped the park with a few tables with parasols and chairs and for a short time had taken books and magazines out to the park for the public but had stopped the practice without explanation, and that was as far as the Library had gone to cooperate with the City in the park.

I advised Mr. Klementowicz that I recalled the Library's efforts to make books available in the park at the time, and why the Library soon found it impractical to continue the practice. I informed him that in 1937, I, as a Senior in College, as Head Page in the Shelf Division of the Main Library was asked at times to assist Miss Edith Prouty who was Head of the Stations Department, and who had been charged by Miss Eastman to make books available in the park. I told him that Miss Prouty would ask that a Page be assigned to take a couple of wooden book trucks loaded with books that she would select out to the park daily. I advised him that I often did that duty myself when I was short of Page help. I recalled that one of Miss Prouty's assistants and I would go out to the park with the books, hoping to serve them to people as they passed through the park. It did not work because the condition of the park was not suitable or conducive to providing books in that way. Why? Because of the ever present drinkers and sleepers in the park, who, when half out of their liquor induced stupors would direct insulting remarks at anyone who might pause to look at the books.

Since the Library did not have custody or control of the park, and since the City's efforts to rid the park of the bums was sporadic and ineffective, the Library had no recourse other than to cease its efforts to reach a reading public in the park. In addition the physical condition of the park was also not conducive or inviting as a reading environment. The City's maintenance of the park was not of the best. At the time, there was poorly kept grass on either side of a cracked concrete walkway and some rarely trimmed ugly looking shrubbery. The only seating available were benches, with wood slats that formed the seats and backs superimposed over concrete end bases. From time to time the City would give the wood parts a coat of dark green paint. All in all, the park made a very uninviting place in which anyone might want to tarry for any length of time. Mr. Klementowicz continued his objections to either giving or leasing the park to the Library. We were for the time being at a standstill in our efforts to get the park, that is, until we enlisted the aid of Mayor Anthony Celebrezze. Anthony Celebrezze was the brother of Frank Celebrezze, who as The city's Safety Director helped me with the hoodlum problem at the Woodland Branch Library in 1941. This time because of the good offices of Mayor Celebrezze, our request was well received. City Council approved leasing the park to the Library for a dollar a year, with the option to renew every ten years and the understanding that the Library would maintain it as an outdoor reading garden in perpetuity.



## Chapter 22. My Metamorphosis from Business Manager to Assistant Director and Deputy Director

During the Board meeting of May 20, 1959, my career in the library was to take still another turn. Miss Wefel had announced her decision to retire as the Library's Assistant Director. I was offered the job effective June 1, 1959. When the offer was made, I was told:

It is customary to assign some specific area of work to the Assistant Director. Miss Vormelker, during her term, oversaw personnel, Miss Wefel supervised the Main Library subject departments, that should I accept the position, I, in that position would be expected to continue to supervise the business activities connected with the Buildings, Printing, Purchasing, and Book Repair Divisions, and continue to oversee the buildings and repair program of the library system.

In short I would be continuing what I was doing as Business Manager of the institution, that the post of Business Manager would be abolished, thus enabling the Library to save the Business Manager's salary. Once again I found myself in the position of having to make a career decision that had another set of aspects having some very serious implications. Here again I was faced with an offer that would require me to wear two hats. As Assistant Director, I would continue to carry the responsibilities of Business Manager as well as accepting the wider functions of a second in command. In the absence of the Director, I would be assuming the Director's functions as well. I was not sure that I wanted to do so. This was another period of soul searching for me. My initial impulse was to reject the offer out-of-hand, and Grace agreed with that course of action, however, she advised me to seek the counsel of Miss Wefel and a couple of other close associates. Miss Wefel and the others advised that I should give the matter more thought before turning the offer down. Again I found myself thinking of father and how he might have counseled me at this time and under these circumstances. From the way that Miss Wefel had reacted, I could see that she did not want me to react negatively to the job offer. Once more I found myself moved by my loyalty to the Library. I decided to accept the Assistant Directorship and continue performing the business functions. I had convinced myself that it would have been the course of action that father would have advised. Grace went along with my decision finally because she had valued Miss Wefel's advice. Of course Miss Wefel was most pleased when I informed her of my decision. She told me that it had been her wish that I succeed her. My appointment as Assistant Director became effective as of June 1, 1959.



The author as Assistant Director and Business Manager of the Cleveland Public Library, 1962 Courtesy of the Cleveland Public Library

By this time the renovation of the Plain Dealer Building as a library annex was nearing completion. The Library Board had approved plans to have the grand opening of the annex on July 8, 1959. I was feeling good about the way the project had developed. That feeling, however was dispelled by a letter that I received from the Interior Steel Company, which was about to complete the installation of the steel book-stacks and shelving in the building. The letter dated June 23, 1959 stated that a jurisdictional dispute had arisen between the carpenters working in the building and the book-stack installers. The bone of contention was, which tradesmen had the right to insert the steel shelves into the book-stack uprights.

The carpenter's union based this right for its workers on an agreement that had been reached between the unions in March of 1928. The iron and sheet metal workers on the other hand cited a March 1952 agreement made between the sheet metal workers and the iron workers that had assigned the job of inserting light gauge metal shelving to the sheet metal workers and heavy gauge shelving to the iron workers. The Interior Steel company maintained that since 1952 it had assigned such work to either the Sheet metal workers or to the iron workers as required, that the practice had not been questioned before, that carpenters and the metal workers had always worked in harmony before on other jobs when such work was going on.

This time, our project was brought to a complete standstill. In sympathy for the carpenters, the acoustical tile workers, the venetian blind installers, the floor tile installers, etc., etc. stopped work. The Interior Steel Company refused to bend. As a result no one was allowed to work. The public opening of the building scheduled for July 8, was postponed indefinitely, until such time as the dispute could be settled and the aborted work could be completed.

A telegram was sent to the National Joint Board for the Settlement of Jurisdictional Disputes in Washington, D.C., urging that representatives be sent posthaste to settle the labor dispute. Those representatives arrived quickly. They found in favor of the carpenters, citing the earlier agreement of March of 1928 as justification. All the trades were ordered to go back to work and to allow the carpenters to insert the shelving in the book-stack uprights. All agreed to go back to work except the Interior Steel Company. Since the Interior Steel Company's work was virtually done, except for the simple insertion of the shelves into the slots of the uprights, I advised the Library Board that inserting shelves in the book-stack uprights was a simple procedure, being done every day by the Library's page staff, that we could do that job ourselves.

On July 14, 1959 the Library Board notified by letter the Interior Steel Company that its refusal to comply with the decision of the National Joint Board for the Settlement of Jurisdictional Disputes was holding up the completion of the project and was cause for terminating their contract. The letter also advised that the cost of the completion of their work would be subtracted from the agreed contract price. This brought the Interior Steel people around. They decided to comply with the decision of the Jurisdictional Board. All trades went back to work, so we were able to get the renovation of the building back on schedule.

The building was completed and we were able to start moving early in August of 1959. I often wonder how we managed to get the job done with everything else that was going on at the same time. All the library furniture and equipment that had been advertised for and contracted for with the lowest and responsible bidders was coming in as scheduled. I recall that we had furniture and equipment coming in from nineteen different companies. While dealing with the logistics of receiving and getting all the items placed properly in the right places, We were also seeing to the move of a million books and hundreds of files from the Main Library Building divisions that were being located in the annex, along with many other various and sundry items, including the printing presses and other equipment and impedimenta of the Printing Department.

With the City's permission, the movement of the books was expedited by having a scaffolding company erect a scaffold across the ninety-one foot wide Eastman Park. It stretched from the second last window of the Science and Technology Division at the northeasterly end of the second floor of the Main Library Building to the a similar window at the northeasterly end of the annex, but at the third floor level which was in line with the window in the Main Library and luckily near the freight elevator in the annex. We had the scaffolding contractor place a conveyor belt across the entire length of the scaffold from window to window. In that way the Page staff was able to ship the books from one building to the other via the conveyor belt in nine days time.

The move was completed by the end of August. Milt Widder of the Cleveland Press wrote among other things about the move in his Saturday, August 29 column as follows" "The job of superintending the remodeling of the Public Library Annex then the moving of thousands of volumes to it was a monumental one. The actual detail headaches of the operation were the responsibility of Edward D'Alessandro, assistant librarian and business manager of the huge Cleveland system. This HALO OF THE WEEK to D'Alessandro for accomplishing the task. In his precise manner he burned the midnight oil (with many of his helpers) to bring about the renovation and moving."

Prior to the official opening of the annex, the Library Board had voted to change the name. Since the Business



Information Division and the Science and Technology Divisions were the two main divisions to occupy the building, it was decided to name the annex the Business and Science Building. Here again the vote was not unanimous. Of the six Board members present at the meeting on July 22, 1959, four voted for the change. Stanley Klonowski voted against the change and Jack Persky abstained from voting. The building from that day on became the Business and Science Building of the Cleveland Public Library by a majority vote of four.

The Building was officially opened to the public on September 17, 1959. It was a simple, low key ceremony held in front of the main entrance of the building, with Mayor Anthony Celebrezze, Mrs. Robert Damison cutting the ribbon and speaking briefly to an audience of guests made up of various civic officials, members of the Library and the Cleveland School Boards, members of the library staff, along with the general public. Following the Ribbon cutting and speeches at the entrance, Mrs. Damison, the Mayor, Library and School Board Members, officers of the Friends of the Library, Ray Lindquist and I formed a receiving line in the building lobby to receive the official guests and the public at a quiet reception with light refreshments.

By the Fall of 1959, we were ready to proceed with our project of converting the Eastman Park into an outdoor reading garden. The City of Cleveland by its Ordinance 747.59 of May 11, 1959 had leased the park to the Library, and the Division of Design and Construction of the Department of Public Properties had approved the plans and specifications as designed for us by Landscape Architect George E. Creed. Mrs. Damison had gotten commitments from the Elizabeth Ring Mather Fund, the Beaumont Fund, the Cleveland Foundation, and the Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund to provide the necessary funds for the redevelopment of the park according to our plans. On October 23, 1959, the Board retained Charles Bacon Rowley and Associates to prepare the architectural designs for the iron fences, their foundations and pillars for the ornamental iron gates that Mrs. Damison had secured from the former Frances E. Drury estate on Euclid Avenue. I recall going to the Drury estate with Mrs. Damison to examine the gates to assess their condition, to see if they would be appropriate for the garden. The gates were large, beautifully designed and constructed, in need of some reconditioning and repair. We agreed, however, that they would be ideal for our project. It was my job to work out the logistics of having the gates removed, transported to and stored temporarily at our Hamilton Avenue storage Building until we could arrange for their restoration and eventual installation at the Rockwell and Superior Avenue sides of the garden.

The garden became another top priority job for me because Mrs. Damison was anxious to get the project completed as soon as possible. At the same time that the Rowley architectural firm was retained for their work on the garden, I also presented the Board bids for basin cement work, planting, and drainage work that had to be done in the park. John Florian, Landscaper as the low bidder was awarded the contract with the condition that he finish the job in thirty days! It was also at this time that the Board voted to request the City of Cleveland to introduce a resolution in Council to change the name of the Eastman Park. We presented that request through the good offices of Mayor Celebrezze. Again, the City graciously and quickly complied and that 91 foot by 202 foot piece of land that had been named Eastman Park in 1937 in honor of Linda A. Eastman before her retirement in 1938, became the Eastman Reading Garden.

While coordinating the work of the Charles Bacon Rowley Architectural and the John Florian Landscaping firms, I managed to seek and get bids from qualified iron work artisans for the restoration of the two iron gates. The Rose Irons Work Company was the successful bidder. The three firms came through meeting our deadlines for the

completion of their work. In so doing they created an amazing transformation of one of the city's small oases in the heart of the downtown area.

In place of the old nondescript park, was a beautiful garden designed by George Creed of the Division of Design and Construction of the City of Cleveland, landscaping done by John Florian of South Euclid, Ohio, that included attractive flowering crab and Gum trees in planters, and luscious, rich green English Ivy ground cover. The new reading garden also was graced by a most unusual and attractive wall fountain at the Rockwell end of the garden that was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Jamison, along with an armillary sundial, placed at the Superior end, given in memory of Eva Morris Baker, librarian and garden lover, by her husband and daughters. Two lovely, large jardinières, the gift of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, were artfully placed, one at each end of the garden. The large ornamental fences, foundations and pillars designed by Charles Bacon Rowley and Associates and the beautifully restored Drury Estate gates done by the Rose Ironworks craftsmen enclosed the garden at Superior and Rockwell Avenue sides.

The Eastman Reading Garden was officially opened for public use on May, 4, 1960. Fortunately, it was a beautiful, sunny day. Again Mrs. Jamison had planned a very simple but appropriate and tastefully orchestrated ceremony to mark the occasion. City officials, including George Creed, and others including John Florian, Charles Bacon Rowley, School and Library, Board members, Director Lindquist and I, and members of the staff were gathered in front of the gate at the Superior Avenue side. Mayor Anthony Celebrezze and Mrs. Jamison after cutting the ribbon, spoke briefly. In her concluding remarks Mrs. Jamison made a point of singling me out in the crowd, saying, "I want you all to know that this garden and the Business and Science Building next door would not have become a reality if it had not been for the dedication and hard work of our Mr. D'Alessandro. To use a carpenter's expression, he alone knows where every nail has gone in the creation of these two projects. Our thanks must go to him!"

The following article marking the occasion appeared in *The Plain Dealer* on May 6, 1960. It is reprinted here with permission from *The Plain Dealer* <sup>(C)</sup>All rights reserved.

#### Quiet Beauty Overtakes Old Eastman Park

Those of us who spent happy years in the old Plain Dealer Building at Superior Avenue and East 6th street are perhaps better qualified than most people to observe the difference in the appearance of the plot of land which extends between the old Plain Dealer Building and the main building of the Cleveland Public Library. In those halcyon days when nights were hot, we would poke our heads out of the windows of the fifth floor and view any number of strange goings on in Eastman Park. We have observed things as very unkempt gentlemen tipping up bottles (which they left behind); somnolent and equally untidy gentlemen all bedded down for the night on mattresses of newspapers (which they also left behind); couples oblivious to everything except themselves much too oblivious etcetera, etcetera. It was not a pretty place, and more than one observer was heard to say: "Why don't they get the drunks and bums out of here?" Today all this has changed. The area is beautiful, filled with shrubs and trees and flowers and colorful chairs. A handsome iron fence encloses both ends of the area, which may be reached from a doorway in the old Plain Dealer Building, now the Library's Business and Science Building. It is properly called the

Linda A. Eastman Reading Garden, in honor of Miss Linda Eastman, 92, who headed the Library from 1918 to 1938. It is a suitable and proper honor for a woman who gave so much to her city—and it is a joy to all of us. If so much beauty can be created from an area where so little beauty formerly existed, it might give Cleveland's leaders, both public and civic, ideas for the improvement of other public land. For, as explained by Mrs. Robert H. Damison, president of the Cleveland Library Board, all the work on the garden was done without cost to the taxpayers; gifts made it possible. What a splendid, splendid way to spend money!

The Eastman Reading Garden soon became a popular place not only for readers and regular users of the library but also for people who worked in the offices in the area and for visitors. In addition to furnishing the garden with comfortable chairs and tables with parasols. We also had a sound system installed in the control booth of the auditorium located in the lower level of the Business and Science Building from which we piped soft, quiet, classical, semi-classical, music along with other popular, relaxing music into the park during the lunch hour from noon until 2:00 P.M. every day from May to early October of each year. It was not unusual to find every seat in the garden occupied by readers and/or workers from the nearby offices reading and eating their lunches at the parasol covered tables, enjoying the beauty of the garden and the peaceful, quiet music as well. On many nice, summer days, when all seating was taken, the overflow of readers could be seen sitting on the wide flat surfaces of the edges of the two large planter boxes under the shade of the gum trees.

My office at the time was on the fourth floor of the main library building at the east side, overlooking the reading garden. On occasion I would look out at a heartwarming scene similar to the one that I have just described, and think back to the time when I too saw the kind of disturbing scene that was reported by the Plain Dealer article. The misusers of the old park were no longer there. The gates were kept closed. Access to the garden during the day and evening hours of the library was through the doorway that had been created where once a large double window had existed in the old Plain Dealer Building close to the Superior Avenue end of the garden. At night after hours, the garden was protected from what had gone before by the high ornamental fence and locked gates.

I was very proud of the way the Eastman Reading Garden had turned out, and have looked back on its creation as one of the best experiences that I have been privileged to have had a part in the years that I was associated with the Cleveland Public Library. The citizens of Cleveland past, present and future owe a great debt of gratitude to Mrs. Robert H. Damison and former Mayor Anthony Celebrezze for making possible this lasting achievement. Although the garden had to be temporarily closed and used as construction storage space for the construction of the Stokes wing the present Library Board and administration are to be commended for its restoration and reopening.

I would err gravely at this point in my story if I did not also express my thanks to Mrs. Robert H. Damison not only for her foresight in spearheading the leasing of the city's park land to be maintained in perpetuity as a reading garden for the people of Cleveland, but also for the purchase of the old Plain Dealer Building and the land it stood on, in that way not only providing a Main Library addition (The Business and Science Building) which served the citizens of Cleveland well over thirty years, but which also provided the site on which the Stokes Wing has been

built. The citizens of Cleveland and the Library Boards and their administrations present and future should realize that they also owe Mrs. Robert H. Damison a vote of thanks for that accomplishment as well.

I am personally especially grateful to Mrs. Damison and to Director Lindquist for having given me the opportunity and privilege to be a part of their team during a period in the Library's history that provided difficult but exciting challenges and accomplishments, a period which has been given scant notice by past Cleveland Public Library historians.

I also am thankful for all those very dedicated Cleveland Public Library staff members who worked with and helped me during that period, from those who served in the top echelons of the administration, including those who served as Branch Librarians, Department and Division Heads, Library Assistants, Maintenance personnel, Pages, etc., whether they served in the Main Library or in the branch libraries. To them must go a great deal of the credit for what was accomplished at the time. Although a lot was accomplished between the years 1956 and 1970. The published record thus far for some unknown reason has given that period in the history of the Cleveland Public Library short shrift.

In addition to the acquiring of the old Plain Dealer Building and converting it into a second Main Library building, and the leasing of the Eastman Park and converting it into the Eastman Reading Garden, there have been other major accomplishments in the library's outreach.

Toward the end of 1963 population growth in the West 140th and Puritas Avenue Area of the city indicated that it was logical and proper for the Cleveland Public Library to establish a branch library there. The Library bookmobile had been serving the area for some time at a location that had been provided by the Ascension Catholic Church School in its parking lot at 4400 East 140th Street. It was a community filled with young families, with many growing children, including mine. The nearest library branch at the time was the West Park Branch located at 3805 West 157th Street and Lorain Avenue. Bookmobile statistics showed that it was time to build a branch in that area.

A sizable parcel of vacant land adjacent to the playground of the old Puritas Public Elementary School located at the corner of East 140th and Puritas Avenue was available. The property belonged to the Cleveland School Board. I lost no time in bringing that parcel to the attention of the board. Shortly after the Library Board approved locating a branch in the area, Henry Schneider who was at the time Chairman of the Library Board Building Committee telephoned me around 7:00 A.M. on the morning of October 14, 1963 to advise me that he had managed to get the Board of Education to agree to release a portion of the large parcel for a library branch building. He advised that the School Board was to meet the following morning, that I should immediately go to the site and measure how much of the property we would need to build the size building that I felt we should have in that area. He said that I should have a finished drawing with the required dimensions in his hands by 8:00 A.M. the following morning for him to present to the School Board at their meeting. You can imagine my thoughts on that morning. Fortunately for me, I had lived in the area for thirteen years and knew it and its people well, and had a good sense of how much use a branch would have in that location, having been active in the elementary, junior and senior high school parent teachers associations, and community as a whole.

The morning of October 14, was not a very good morning to be out measuring land for a building. We had

awakened to our first big snowfall of the year. It was a heavy one and it was still snowing by the time I was able to get Val Sopko the Library's Chief Engineer to meet me at the site to help me take the measurements. Val and I accomplished the task wearing heavy winter coats, gloves and high top snow boots. I remember that at some points in the snow drifts, we were up to our knees in snow as we measured. I recall that upon finishing, driving downtown to my office and spending the rest of the day making the finished drawing that Mr. Schneider had requested I have ready for him the next morning. With it, he was able to convince the School Board of our need. He got the property, and we built the Rockport Branch Library located at 4421 West 140th Street. It was opened to the public on August 3, 1964.

For some time after the Business and Science Building had been in operation, I had had my eye on the double dock area at the ground level of the Rockwell Avenue side of the building. I kept playing around with the idea that it would be easy to convert the easterly portion into a drive-up book return. I kept drawing rough sketches of what I envisioned until I finished one that I finally felt might pass muster with Mr. Lindquist and the Library Board. To my surprise, they approved the idea. I lost no time in getting professional architectural drawings and construction bids. Construction was completed without a hitch.

The drive-up book return became a reality in 1965. Like the Eastman Reading Garden, it too became one of the most popular facilities of the Main Library complex. It was open from Monday through Saturday during the library's regular hours. Readers were not only able to return books there but also to order books and other library materials in advance for pick-up the following day. This was another first among the Library's long list of firsts. The 1960's also saw the beginnings of the computerization of the Cleveland Public Library, the building of new branch buildings and many improvements made in the physical plant of the Main Library and its older branch library buildings.

In the Spring of 1965, the Library Board sent me to the University of Illinois to take a course in the computerization of libraries to prepare me to start automating the library's procedures. I was one of thirty people from libraries all over the country enrolled in a course that had been geared specifically to train librarians to bring their libraries into the computer age. Although the course only lasted about a month, it crammed into us what amounted to that which is normally taught in a semester. We were taught the computer language known as fortran, we learned all about software, hardware, programming, key punching etc., etc. I recall working with my classmates as late as midnight on many evenings struggling through various computer assignments and problems, at the same time trying to read and absorb long reading assignments in our textbook. You can rest assured that it was a struggle for all of us. It had been so many- years since we had been students. We had forgotten how to study efficiently, so much so that we formed study groups. In that way we were able to master our often very dull long reading assignments and complete our computer problems in the computer lab successfully. Suffice it to say, we completed the course and were awarded certificates to prove that we had passed the course.

On May 19, 1965, the Library Board authorized the establishment of the library's first data processing center. The goal being to automate in phases, following the hiring of a qualified technically proficient staff. The library was to be automated in the following phases: Phase I, the payroll and the library's business operations, Phase II, Serial Records, Phase II, Book Ordering, Phase III, Cataloging, Phase IV, Lending procedures. Patron access to the library's resources via computer was to be tackled after the first four phases had been accomplished successfully.

We began by leasing the equipment from IBM for the remainder of 1965 and for 1966. The initial cost was \$7,284.00. The first equipment was an IBM 1410 computer and printer along with key punch equipment, all of which was the state of the art at the time. Looking back on all that now that I find myself producing this book on my desk top computer and printer, I can't help marveling at the changes that have occurred in this technology in a little over thirty years, and can't help referring to that old 1410 and the key punch machine and other early equipment as dinosaurs. Be that as it may, we did manage to begin automating the Cleveland Public Library in 1965. However small, we started it all!

The year 1965 also was the year that we were able to take over the property located at 7906-7910 Detroit Avenue that had been willed to the Library by Dr. Frank. W. Walz. It was a large plot of land that extended from Detroit Avenue back to Lake Avenue, which provided enough space on the Detroit Avenue side to build a good size branch library building. Its neighbor across the street was the old Saint John hospital. Three wood frame structures had occupied the Detroit Avenue side of the Walz property. Dr. Walz had been an old time horse and buggy doctor who had practiced medicine for many years in one of the two homes that occupied the Detroit Avenue frontage. The larger of the three had been the family home and the smaller one had been his office. The third structure at the rear of the homes was the doctor's carriage house where his horse and buggy had been kept. By the time that we took over the property, the larger home had been razed. The smaller home was still occupied and rented by an elderly woman, and her daughter, who had been serving as the caretakers of the property after the doctor's death and since there were no heirs. The doctor in his later years, I understood had been a regular user of the Cleveland Public Library and had been a friend of Library Director Clarence Metcalf.

When the tenants vacated the property in May of 1965, the Library board authorized the razing of the little house and the carriage house to make way for a branch library building to be named in honor of Doctor Walz. Before the house was torn down, I recall taking Ray Lindquist out to see the property. As we explored the empty house, we found what we thought might have been a secret hideaway for the doctor's money and valuables in a clothes closet in one of the bedrooms. The lower part of the back wall of the closet was covered with wood paneling. I recall touching one of the panels to feel the finish because of its unusual texture. To my surprise several panels suddenly slid up revealing a built-in, empty wooden box. We could only surmise that the good doctor had used the secret hideaway for his cash and valuables.



The author as Deputy Director of Cleveland Public Library, 1967  
 Courtesy of the Cleveland Public Library

The Hargett-Hoag Architectural Associates had been hired on January 20, 1965 to design and oversee the construction of the Frank W. Walz Branch, so we were able to proceed with securing the bids for its construction immediately.

Early in February 1966, the Library Board had also approved our plan to refurbish the old Hough Branch. Like a Cinderella story, the inside was not only totally renovated but also replenished with \$10,000 worth of new children's books. It was renovated as a treasure house of reading materials for children, The old Hough Branch formally became the Treasure House Branch on March 13, 1966.

For a long time we had been wanting to make the Main Library book return desk more accessible to the public. We decided to convert the checkroom at the main entrance of the Main Library Building to such a facility. Following board approval on June 15, 1966, we were able mostly by in-house labor and our own resources to create that

facility quickly. As a result from 1966 on users of the Main Library have been able to return their books at the front door as soon as they walk into the building.

Ground was broken for the new Walz Branch on June 27, 1966, and was opened to the public on March 12, 1967. It remains a perpetual memorial to Frank N. Walz, M.D., where he not only lived and served people as one of the last of his kind, providing the kind of personal care and healing that we old-timers recall with great nostalgia. I feel proud that I as the library's agent drew the duty of seeing that this most fitting monument to the good doctor became a reality.

On January 1, 1967, the Library Board on Ray Lindquist's recommendation had promoted me to Deputy Director, again with the understanding that I continue to carry the responsibilities of a business manager. Earlier I had developed and presented two five year plans for making much needed repairs and capital improvements in the library's buildings to the Library Board and to the Cuyahoga County Budget Commission and competed with the other library systems for intangible tax residue funds as they became available from 1956 on to cover the cost.

Between the years 1956 and 1970, the Budget Commission agreed with and approved my requests for such funds generously. Those funds made it possible to replace the old and in many cases defective coal boilers in every one of the branch buildings with new and more efficient gas furnaces, to replace old wiring and electric light fixtures, to replace worn floor coverings, to replace bad roofs, plumbing, and to do major plaster repairs and painting in the Main Library and virtually all of the branch libraries. The Budget Commission was convinced to grant the funds required to replace deteriorated down spouts within the walls of the Main Library that had been causing severe water damage to many wall areas in the building when presented pieces of broken and corroded pieces of down spouts as evidence during a budget hearing.

Intangible tax residue tax funds for building new branch library buildings were also sought. In the spring of 1967, the Budget Commission allocated \$429,828.95 from the 1966 Intangibles Tax Residue. \$350,000 was awarded for building a new branch library building in the University Circle area to replace the inadequate Euclid-100 Street Branch that had existed in rented quarters in small rooms on the rear of the second floor of a store building located at East 101st and Euclid Avenue since the early thirties, and to replace the less used Alta House and the Cedar Branches. The remaining \$79,828.95 was allocated for sidewalk repairs around the Business and Science Building and various other repairs in the Main Library Building and in the branches.

At the same time, we had been negotiating with the City for a site for the proposed new branch in the University Circle area. On May 18, 1967, I advised the board that I had met with Mayor Ralph Locher to discuss our request that the site of the old Elysium owned by the City be deeded free of charge to the library as a possible location for the new branch library in the Circle. Mayor Locher had received our request in a cooperative and friendly manner and had referred the matter to Layton Washburn the City's Director for City Planning.

When it became evident that the City was not going to give the Library the Elysium site, we looked for and found another site for purchase at a reasonable price. Another site located at Reserve Court and East 107th Street was found.

On December 21, 1967, with Board approval we requested \$131,000 from the Intangibles Tax Residue of that



year from the Budget Commission. We were able to convince the Commission that we needed that amount mainly to help with the building of the proposed new branch library in University Circle. Our request was broken down as follows” \$50,000 to help toward the purchase of the site, \$59,000 for its book stacks, steel shelving and furniture and equipment, and \$22,000 to be used for roof and side walk repairs at the Brooklyn, Carnegie West, East 79th, Jefferson, Rice and Superior Branch Libraries.

At the same time as co-owners of the Alta House Library property, we negotiated with the Alta House Social Settlement Board of Trustees to transfer our share of the property over to that Board for the sum of \$50,000 with the provision that the transfer occur at the end of 1967, those funds to be added to the University Circle Regional Library building fund.

The Library board also settled on the parcel of land in the Circle near the Fifth District Police Station, known as Parcel No. 119-20-17, located at 1962 East Assistant Director and Deputy Director 181 107th Street now known as Stokes Boulevard. We had it quickly appraised and the Library Board committed itself to its purchase for the sum of \$174,000 before December 31, 1967.



## Chapter 23. The School Board Takes over School Library Service and Ray Lindquist Retires

AS 1967 came to a close, the last one year contract with the School Board for supplying library service to the schools came to an end. The Library's School Department was abolished on January 1, 1968. The School Board hired its own school library administrator. The school librarians became employees of the School Board with a liaison person at the Library until the transition was completed. The quarter of a million books which were the property of the Library remained in the school libraries, with the understanding that the Library would no longer add to them. The Library, also agreed to continue the delivery and pickup of special loan requests to the school libraries. These provisions were made upon the advice and approval of the County Prosecutor, the Library's legal counsel.

The Library had finally been able to completely relinquish its partnership with the School Board in providing school library service. The Library Board as a creature of the School Board along with the Library administration had been placed in a most awkward and untenable situation by the Budget Commission and the Ohio Supreme Court's ruling on school library service. The result was cold and strained relations with the School Board. The brunt of this change in relations was to be borne by Library Director Ray Lindquist and by me. It was to affect Ray Lindquist first.

Early on in 1968, one of the newer members of the Library Board made an appointment to come to my office for a private conference. Even now after almost thirty years, it pains me to think of it. It is an experience that I wish I had never had. It was a brief but most upsetting conference. On his arrival this board member shut my door and took a chair along side my desk and without any preamble of any kind proceeded to tell me that he wanted me to tell Ray Lindquist that it was time for him to resign or retire from his position as director of the library. I was so shocked and unable to say a word in reply for several seconds. Before I could recover, he went on to say that he and other members of the board were not happy with Mr. Lindquist and felt that he should move on. By this time, I had recovered. I replied that this was not a conversation that he should be having with me, that I as Mr. Lindquist's Deputy Director had great respect for him as the Library's director, and that I could not do such a thing. Our meeting ended on that note. In August of 1968, Ray Lindquist retired after having served first the Cuyahoga County Library and then the Cleveland Public Library with distinction for a combined period of more than twenty years.

All my instincts told me that this kind of pressure by a recently appointed Library board member might have been inspired by the Board of Education. I felt strongly that this did not bode well for the library. For the first time in my long and happy career in the library, I began to have grave doubts about the future of the library.

My intuition was telling me that this was the time for me to end my professional career in my home city and seek a position elsewhere. In years past I had had offers from the Akron Public Library when its director Russell Munn had sought me as his Assistant Director, when I had received job offers from the Boston Public Library, from the Worcester Massachusetts Public Library, and from Alan Hoover when he had invited me to be the Director of the Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa. I had turned down all those offers because of my loyalty to the Cleveland Public Library. I had no doubts about my ability to get another library position comparable to the one I had in Cleveland.

That evening I discussed this turn of events with Grace. She agreed that this might be the time for me to make the change in my career. I recall that I immediately went to my home files and pulled out my resume and began to update it. As I began making the necessary changes, I began thinking of father and how he might advise me at this time. As I thought about how he might react to my thoughts of leaving the library, I found myself overcome by a sense of guilt. I recalled another time when I had thought of leaving, the time when Quincy Mumford had asked me to go to the Library of Congress with him in 1954. I remembered that I had resisted the temptation to go because I felt that it was not the right thing to do at the time. I had stayed because I felt that I would be deserting the Library. That night I recall saying to Grace, "How can I leave now that Ray Lindquist is gone, when In 1954, I did not leave when Quincy Mumford left." I ended by saying, "I can't desert the Library now!" As I look back on that evening, I remember Grace laughing and saying, "I knew all along that you'd decide to stay!" And so I continued to serve the people of Cleveland in the Cleveland Public Library.

It was natural that following Ray Lindquist's retirement in August, that as Deputy Director I should conduct the business of the library until such time as the Library Board made other provisions. I did so until October 29, 1968 when the Library Board decided that I should be appointed Acting Director until such time as a Director could be appointed. I accepted this appointment not knowing what lay in store for me in the year and a half that was to follow.

The Library Board proceeded to search for a director nationwide through advertisements in the professional journals, other publications and through contacts with the American Library Association, etc. As Acting Director, I not only assumed the responsibilities of the office of Director but also continued with the duties of Business Manager as I had been charged to do in 1959 when the Library Board promoted me to Assistant Director and again in 1967 when I was promoted to Deputy Director. I recall that on that October day in 1968 when I temporarily assumed the helm of the Cleveland Public Library, a Branch Librarian who had been one of my mentors when I was a Page back in the nineteen thirties, came to congratulate me. In doing so, she asked, "How does it feel to be the chief cook and bottle washer?" She ended by saying, "Take care of yourself, and remember that you are not made of iron!" At the time, I laughed, not realizing that she was giving me a warning.



#### THE TERMINAL TOWER LIBRARY BOOTH

Located in the West Concourse of the Cleveland Union Terminal is the Library's new Terminal Tower Booth, ready to serve readers of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County daily, Monday thru Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., and Saturdays from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. *Closed on Sundays.* It is a new, convenient facility for the pick-up and return of library books.

A small rotating collection of 2,000 books will be available for borrowing. However, a reader desiring a specific book (or books) should phone the department of Main Library in which the book classifies, asking to have it sent for pick-up in the Terminal. Books so requested will be ready after 1:00 P.M. on the following day and will be held for one more day for the convenience of the borrower.

Readers must have Cleveland Public Library cards with them for borrowing at the Terminal. Library cards cannot be issued nor can fines be accepted there. Fines may be paid later at the Main Library or at one of the Branches.

Library Kiosk in Cleveland's Union (rail) Terminal opens for service November 25, 1968. Flyer courtesy of the Cleveland Public Library.



## Chapter 24. At the Helm as Acting Director as the Library's Centennial Year Begins

The next year or more was to be a time of challenge and destiny for me. It was to be a time of intense activity and hard work, filled with accomplishment and disappointment. It was to be a time of much happiness and satisfaction along with heartache and sadness. In fact it was to be a major turning point in my life and career.

A short time before my appointment as Acting Director, I had the notion that there must be a way to reach the commuting public who passed through downtown Cleveland daily to work, to school, to shop, etc. Believing that a public library must be constantly looking for innovative methods of getting books to people, the idea evolved that it would be wise to establish a circulating outlet for popular reading materials in the Terminal Tower Building to serve those busy commuters who passed through, to and from the Rapid Transit Stations. I found a great spot in the west concourse. I figured that an eight foot by ten foot space along its west wall would be ideal for a booth or kiosk that size which I knew that the Library carpenters could build of wood in our shop. With this information in mind, I then contacted the management of the Cleveland Union Terminals Company. I was able to sell the idea and to get a commitment to lease the space to the Library on a month to month basis at a rental of \$100 a month, plus metered cost for light and power.

My next step was to get the approval of the Library Board, which was unanimous. Ralph Malvin, foreman of the Library carpentry shop was able to design and construct a very attractive kiosk to serve as a mini library station in the Terminal Tower to serve all residents of the county who commuted on the trains coming through the terminal. The kiosk was opened for service on November 25, 1968.

The kiosk proved to be another first in library service and became very popular. It received some great publicity in the media, general and library. One of many laudatory articles appeared in "The Tee-Pee, Notes and News of the Toledo Public Library." It proclaimed, "One nearby large city where rapid mass transit still works effectively is Cleveland, and its Union Terminal is like Grand Central Station at commuting hours. So now the Cleveland Public Library has established a mini branch library in a cottage-like structure inside the west concourse! Stocked with 1800 books (volumes from each of the 12 subject departments) it can lend as well as receive, but primarily it is for the convenience of readers enroute to work, etc. needing to pickup and return library books, tho so far no fine payments may be paid there. It opens at 7:30 A.M. and closes at 7:00 P.M., Monday through Fridays. Wonder if the New York Public Library, Tokyo, and the London libraries will copy?"



Post card issued in Centennial Year shows Time to Read Clock sign on the Business and Science Building, Eastman Reading Garden, the drive-up book return, main building entrance. Courtesy of the Cleveland Public Library

Samples of some of the many favorable comments made by those who used the facility over time were as follows: “Oh! I like this,” “What a lovely idea,” “Excellent idea,” “Mini Branch is a great idea,” “I have heard of the Cleveland Public Library in San Francisco. I think this just great. I must write the San Francisco Public Library and let them know of your new idea. Just, just wonderful!”

Subsequently other libraries did follow suit, and it was not too long afterward that I saw advertisements by some manufacturers showing pictures of kiosks they were building for sale as mini branches! I recall telling Ralph Malvin that he should have secured a patent of the idea and used the kiosk that he and his fellow carpenters built as a model or prototype.

It would be unfair to Ralph Malvin’s memory if I were to neglect to mention that the creation of the kiosk was not the only example of his skill as the library’s chief carpenter at the time. Ralph could have and also should have filed for a patent for another creation that I believe may have been the first of its kind in the way of library furniture and equipment. During my watch as the Library’s Business Manager, when we were renovating and building new branch buildings, Ralph designed and built beautiful oak wood shelving for the storage and display of magazines. Up until that time libraries were content to shelve and display current periodicals on plain open shelving units. Ralph produced sections of wooden shelving large enough to accommodate magazines of various sizes, with the usual flat shelves for storing the back issues, with sloping shelves with lips at the bottom, on which the most recent or current issues of the magazines could be displayed. The sloping shelves could be raised and slid back over the top of each shelf and held by a magnetic catch so that a reader could also select from the stacks of back issues of the corresponding magazines shelved on the flat shelves underneath.

I honestly believe that readers in the Cleveland Public Library have been privileged to have had the use of this type of innovative magazine shelving long before any other library in the country because of Ralph Malvin's ingenuity and skill. Again it was not too long after this type of magazine shelving had been installed in many of our buildings that a number of library furniture and equipment supply houses put similar shelving on the market. Some of the early manufacturers came out with comparable magazine shelving made of steel. Yes, I also had advised Ralph to get his idea for this kind of shelving under patent. However, I have not seen shelving like Ralph's really duplicated in style and quality, especially in wood!

As the year 1968 was drawing to a close, our thoughts had for some time turned to making plans for observing the library's centennial. The Cleveland Public Library would be celebrating its 100th birthday on February 17, 1969. I had appointed a committee made up of Department Heads and other staff to work with me and the Friends of the Cleveland Public Library. This proved to be a very effective combination. Our combined efforts resulted in a happy, eventful and successful celebration that was to continue through the entire year of 1969, beginning with a parade on February 17 from the location of the first library at West third and Superior Avenue to the present location. Official cars bearing centennial banners carried Board members, civic officials, members of the Friends of the Library and staff on this symbolic trek to the Main Library, where a special ribbon cutting was held at the entrance to the Brett Hall, where proclamations from our Mayor, Governor, and from President-Elect Richard Nixon were read. The centennial banquet followed on the evening of February 18 at the Sheraton Cleveland Hotel. One of our featured speakers that evening was Polykarp Kusch, dean of faculties at Columbia University and the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Physics, and who also had been a former fellow Cleveland Public Library Page in the 1920's. Polykarp was the son of immigrant parents. Born in Germany, of a Polish father and a Dutch mother, migrated to the United States and to Cleveland as a child with his parents. Like myself and so many other Cleveland Library Pages, he worked his way through school, earning his degree in Physics at Case Institute of Technology. Over the years I have always felt that Polykarp Kusch and I shared a kindred spirit in that we continued to have an enduring affection for the Cleveland Public Library long after we left to continue our careers elsewhere because it had not only helped us to earn our educations and attain our respective professions, but also because it had enabled us to grow culturally and socially. It was because of that feeling of kinship that Polykarp Kusch was asked to be our key speaker at the centennial banquet. I recall how pleased I was when he lost no time in accepting our call to come back for that evening to participate in one of our kick-off events marking the 100th birthday of the library we loved so much.

During the course of his remarks on that very special evening, he said among other things, "I have a great affection for the Cleveland Public Library. I worked there over a period of five years. It was an absolutely great experience. My fellow pages were energetic, bright people, all from the submerged classes, and we worked for thirty cents an hour!"

With that one sentence, Polykarp Kusch summed up another product of the Cleveland Public Library that may not have been noted by many. Over the years the Library has been lauded for its reputation and for the high esteem for which it has been held among the nation's public libraries, for its service and its important and unique collections as well as its many firsts and innovations. I don't believe that much has been said before about the caliber and quality of the Library's human product. Like our beloved country, the Cleveland Public Library has welcomed many of us as young people, like Polykarp Kusch from poor, immigrant homes, given us work and training that



not only helped us realize the American dream in a variety of professions but also benefited us culturally and socially.

I could mention the names of many others who as alumni of the Cleveland Public Library have worked their way through school and on into a variety of professions and careers. I shall not because there would be enough to fill the pages of another book. I will however tell you briefly about a few. There was Doctor David Dugan, who preceded me by a few years as Head Page of the Main Library. He went on to distinguish himself as a thoracic surgeon. There was Doctor George Bidder, who succeeded me as Head Page, and who became a professor of pharmacology in the School of Medicine at Western Reserve University, now Case Western Reserve University. There was my brother Arthur, who became a general surgeon, served as a battle field surgeon in five campaigns in Europe during World War II, served as Chief of Surgery at the Parma General Hospital, which he helped to establish, and then went on to practice his profession for forty years or more. There was Mike Krisko, who became a family doctor and then gynecologist, who also went on to practice medicine for well over forty years. There was Albert Maslow, who became an educator and sociologist. There was Charles Ferraro, who first became a librarian and then a successful psychologist, who taught and also had a long career at NASA.

I was not the only page who went on to a long career in librarianship. I feel that it is appropriate to end this list by mentioning four pages who went on to become librarians in the suburbs of Cleveland. Rachel Wayne Nelson, director of the Cleveland Heights/University Heights Public Library, George Scherma, director of the Rocky River Public Library, Joseph Bana, director of the Euclid Public Library, Daniel Hagelin, Head of Reference Services of the Lakewood Public Library. All four served their constituencies long and well. The foregoing list is more than adequate proof that the Cleveland Public Library has also distinguished itself as a training ground for many who have succeeded in a variety of professions.

A number of other memorable events marked the Library's centennial year. During the course of the hundred years that had passed countless millions of books had been loaned to the people of greater Cleveland. Most of these books had been returned, however, as is usual there were those books that had not been returned for one reason or another as well as some that may have been taken out without being charged. As a part of the Library's centennial observances, we gave public notice of an amnesty on fines and a no questions asked on the return of such books no matter how long they had been outstanding. In short we cancelled all past and present fines and fees up through February 17, 1969, so that the people of Greater Cleveland and the Library might have a fresh start on its hundredth birthday. Large containers were placed in the lobbies of all Cleveland Public Library agencies for the return of uncharged books where such books could be placed anonymously.

3,954 books were returned at the main Library, and 4,723 books were returned in the branches. The longest overdue book returned was at the Union Branch. It was a copy of "The Turmoil" by Booth Tarkington. It should have been returned July 9, 1919. Another was returned at the Collinwood Branch which had not been charged, but was last inventoried and found missing in 1909. It was "The Red Gauntlet" by Sir Walter Scott.

Tours, lectures, luncheons emphasizing centennial themes were happy and notable occasions throughout the year. The Cleveland Transit System agreed to advertise the Library's centennial by displaying a specially designed

poster in all its vehicles all year. The City allowed us to put attractive posters on poles around the Public Square and along Superior Avenue. These posters remained in place for the entire year. A special pictorial brochure was also published and distributed to all library users and visitors. Large, attractive posters calling attention to the 100th Anniversary, were sent to all the branch libraries for display in each building along with copies to be distributed for display in neighborhood store windows. The Friends of the Cleveland Public Library underwrote the cost of two huge dark blue banners or flags with "100" in large figures inscribed in gold, which hung from the facades of the Main Library and Business and Science Building.

During the centennial year, as Chairman of the Ohio Library Development Committee and as a member of the local Council of Library Administrators in the Greater Cleveland area, I saw the Administrators and Library boards of the nine library systems in Cuyahoga County join a teletype network to speed-up communication of the availability of books and other library materials between users of each of the cooperating libraries. As a result, requests for books and other materials could be individually or simultaneously transmitted to all the libraries in the county.

The centennial year also saw the inception of another advance in cooperation among the library systems of Cuyahoga County. In the interest of better service to all county residents it seemed wise that each of the nine libraries should honor or accept one another's library cards instead of requiring borrowers to be registered in the various libraries and carry several library cards. Since we had had a reciprocal book return system in place for a number of years, each of the library systems began honoring each others library cards early in our centennial year.

Although deeply involved in the many activities connected with the celebration of the centennial at the Main Library and in the branch libraries, work connected with the operation of the library and the library's other projects continued full steam ahead.

The Library Board had been receiving a lot of calls and heavy demands from the parents and residents in the East 71 and Kinsman area about their need for branch library service in that area. They complained that the Woodland Branch Library located at 5806 Woodland Avenue was difficult for them to reach, that it was especially dangerous for their children who they contended had to cope with the heavy traffic conditions faced between their homes and that branch. I had asked Adeline Corrigan, Supervisor of Branches and Kenneth Eynon, Head of the Buildings Department to investigate the need and to survey the area for possible space that might be rented for the installation of a small branch library and report back. They found that there was a large concentration of children in the area, especially in the Garden Valley Housing Project located at 7100 Kinsman Avenue and although as the crow flies, the distance from the project to the Woodland Branch was not too far, it would be difficult and dangerous for children to deal with the traffic conditions that existed on Kinsman Avenue, especially at the east 55th Street intersection that they would have to pass through before they could get to the Woodland Branch.

So along with all the activity connected with the centennial celebration we found ourselves engaged in negotiations with John Ward, representative of the Metropolitan Housing Authority for space in one of the Project Housing Units for a small branch outlet there.

At the same time the bids that had been received from the contractors for the building of the University Circle Regional Branch Library were too high and had been rejected. Since a sizable portion of the funds for the

building was coming through the Ohio State Library in the form of a Federal grant under the Library Services and Construction Act, we not only had to revise our construction drawings to cut the costs to fall within the funds available but also had to resubmit our revised plans and specifications to the State Library and the state Architect for approval before re-advertising. Once again I found myself working long hours, working with the staff involved and David Ward who was the architect for the project, making revisions we could agree on.

The changes we made did not effect the exterior of the building, thus the need for re-submitting the plans for approval again to the University Circle Development Foundation and to the Fine Arts and the City Planning Commission was not necessary. The changes we were able to make in the interior of the building did not affect the comfort, aesthetics or the efficiency of the building in any way. The overall interior space was only reduced about 8 percent in size, however, the changes made enabled us to cut the total cost of building by \$136,850.00, which brought us within our budget.

Fortunately the Library Board, the State Library and the State Architect approved what we had done and gave speedy approval of our new plans and permission to re-advertise for bids. So we were on our way once again in this regard. The Library Board was especially pleased with the way this building problem had been solved. They all made a point of calling me to offer me their commendations. I made clear to them that it had been a joint effort, that it could not have been possible without the cooperation and help of the architect and capable members of the involved administrative team, Adeline Corrigan, Fern Long, Dorothy Fechter, and Valentine Sopko.

Some time before the Library's 100th Birthday, Mrs. Florence Graham, chairperson of the Personnel Committee paid me a visit in my office, and spent well over an hour trying to convince me to apply for the directorship of the library. I recall telling her that while I was pleased and honored to have been considered worthy, I felt that I had to be frank and honest about my feelings about the job, that not only was I not interested, but also that I would not touch it with a ten foot pole. I remember that I apologized for my frankness and choice of words. She asked why I felt that way about the position. I told her that I preferred not to say anything more than that I chose to continue serving the library as Acting Director until the Board could appoint a new director, and that I would rather finish my career as the library's Deputy Director. Being the gracious and understanding lady that she was, Mrs. Graham accepted my refusal. As she left my office, she said that she would convey my feelings on the matter to the rest of the Board.

I thought that I had laid the matter of the directorship to rest. I was wrong. Around the first of February, 1969, I was visited by Mr. Lockwood Thompson, President of the Board, Mr. Stanley Klonowski, member of the Finance Committee and Mrs. Graham. As the old saying goes, you could have knocked me over with a feather! I had never had three board members descend on me all at once.

They had come to beard me in my den as it were and to get me to change my mind about the directorship. To this day, I wish they had not come in force as it were. It put me at a distinct disadvantage. I had had a long and respectful relationship with the two men since they had been on the Board longer than Mrs. Graham. This would make it more difficult for me to say no to them!

I had known Mr. Klonowski even longer than I had known Mr. Thompson. My relationship with Mr. Klonowski dated back to 1946 when I had become Branch Librarian at the Fleet Branch Library, well before he had become

a member of the Library Board. The Fleet Branch was his neighborhood library. His home and the Bank of Cleveland of which he was President and CEO were on nearby Broadway Avenue. He, his wife Stella and children were regular users of the Branch Library. I as their neighborhood librarian had developed a very close relationship with the Klonowski family just as I had with the many other families who used the library. As I have mentioned earlier in this narrative, the Fleet Branch Library community was unique in the way it looked upon its library and librarian. The people of that community had the same singular respect for their library and librarian as they had for their schools and teachers, and for their church and priests. My years in that community had brought Mr. Klonowski and me together in community and civics activities as well. I had worked with him when he chaired the area's Community Fund Campaigns and during the time that I served as President of the Southeast Community Council. As a result it was natural that we should have developed a great respect for one another.

You can see what I was up against when Mrs. Graham brought those two top guns with her to reopen the question of the directorship with me to my home on that evening. I was able to hold to my original position about the directorship for well over an hour, however, when Mr. Klonowski and Mr. Thompson told me that they had been talking to staff in the Main Library and the branches and had found as Mr. Thompson put it, "a well-spring of support for Mr. D'Alessandro," and that he could guarantee full support of the Library Board for me, I finally reluctantly gave in and agreed to throw my hat in the ring. As I look back on it now, I realize, that it was the great esteem and respect that I had for those two men that had caused me to change my mind.

Grace who had supported me in my original position to resist the appointment was silent that evening. I thought of father and how he might have advised me and how he would have reacted to this complete about face on my part. I recalled that he used to be very critical of my brothers and me when we had second thoughts or began to second guess ourselves after we had made a decision. He used to tell us it is alright to change your mind, however, once you have made a decision and have committed yourselves, you must follow through.

In honor of the centennial, the Library Board had decided that it would be appropriate to schedule its February meeting on the 17th, the library's birthday, at 4:00 P.M. I had no idea of what was in store for me and the library on that day. Although the Board had as was customary, previously approved the printed agenda for the meeting, certain events that I had had no previous knowledge or warning intruded that made headlines.

Before getting into the printed agenda, President Thompson presented two surprise items. The first one was a resolution that he said that he had received from the Board of Education urging the Library Board to delay its appointment of a Director until additional candidates had been sought out and interviewed because it as the parent body felt that the Library Board's nationwide search had not been as wide or as thorough as it should have been. He then spoke of a telegram he had received from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, asking for the opportunity to present a statement to the Library Board. Mr. Thompson then invited Mr. Rodney Coleman, Co-Chairman of the NAACP Labor and Industry Committee to give his statement.

Before Mr. Coleman had a chance to speak, Mr. George Livingston, Chairman of the Library Board's Extension Committee asked that the Board allow him to explain that he had been approached by certain people, who were concerned, not only about the appointment of a new Director for the Library, but that the Library should be concerned about its future progress and growth in the community. He reported that a number of representatives

of various community organizations were with Mr. Coleman, including representatives from the Glenville Area Council, the Pace Association, the Leadership Development and the Near West-Side groups, the Kinsman Project and several Head Start Mothers' groups. He said that all these people had a real concern for the Library System.



## Chapter 25. To My Surprise I am Appointed Director of the Cleveland Public Library in a Tumultuous Board Meeting

Mr. Coleman addressed the members of the Library Board as follows:

As a representative of the NAACP Labor and Industry Committee and of the black community, we are here to register our very deep concerns regarding recent public allegations about the Cleveland Public Library System. Somewhat belatedly and through public media, we are informed, through quotations of a member of the Cleveland Board of Education, that Cleveland has a second-rate library system. By inference, it has been indicated also that the library staff is second-rate and there is no one currently in the local community capable of assuming the directorship. The only solution offered to these alleged problems is a somewhat pat proposal to hire a director from outside the local community. If, indeed, our library is second rate, it is well past time that the citizens should show concern. We of the black and minority group communities are most particularly concerned that the list of negative conditions within the system are far from being completely spelled out. We deplore the notion, or suggestion, that all can be made well again merely by importing a new director. We take the position that the statements and proposals made to date represent myopic vision in relation to the real problems of our library system. For example, the outstanding problem of the system is that it is one of the very few tax supported institutions which continues to practice de facto segregation in the hiring and placement of personnel; entire departments are lilywhite; one department is all black; black librarians are assigned to black areas, while white librarians serve in all communities; in a system of 1100 employees, not one black person holds an administrative position; finally we charge that the majority of the black personnel are in the low-paying work echelons; the history of recruiting and upgrading of

minority group personnel under previous imported directors deserves the condemnation of this entire community. We are most concerned that those who are so recently vociferous in the public media about needed change should so obviously overlook these facts.

We suggest that the individual Board members cease the apparent personal politicking and devote their combined efforts to developing a library system of which all citizens can be proud. We, as concerned citizens, strongly urge that the Library Board immediately develop a policy and a statement on equal opportunity for all races, creeds, colors within all echelons of the library system.

We further urge the Library Board to develop, implement and pledge itself responsible for a strong, affirmative action program. Such a program, to be relevant, must include provision for Board support for the following provisions:

*Affirmative action programs for hiring minority group members by building contractors and actively soliciting minority group building contractors. Solicitation officials from minority group contractors in all contracts let by the Library System.*

It is our hope that the beginning of the second century of library service will reflect a new awareness of the changes which have taken place in our society; that within the near future our system will have all of the attributes of leadership; this to be accomplished not merely by importing directors, opening libraries on Sundays or improving communications, but by meeting the challenge of undoing the damages wrought by a century of racist practices and policies. We appreciate this opportunity to state our position and look forward to meeting with you in the future regarding these issues. We want this Board to roll up their sleeves and execute some resolution setting forth an effective policy for the promotion and upgrading of black employees, representative of all tax payers in this community.

We ask for a list of all job classifications of employees, with an indication of how many are black employees, to find out if the Board is really making progress in this line.

We hope you are aware of the problems that will exist in the second century of the Library, that there will be hardships. People really don't hear the winds shift until it is too late. We hope you will appoint a local director and that he will be aware of what is going on. We hope you will look ahead and avoid the problems of the future.

This ended Mr. Coleman's statement.

This was indeed a bombshell. Over the years the Library Board room had been the site for a number of unusual, news breaking events, but never anything like this! The Cleveland Public Library found itself on the evening of its 100th birthday branded as a racist institution for all of its one hundred years! For a few moments after Mr. Coleman had spoken there was complete silence. It, however, was broken by Mr. Livingston when he calmly said, "I move that the President of the Library Board appoint a committee, charged with the responsibility of developing a policy statement on equal opportunity for the Cleveland Public Library with guidelines for effective action programs to bring about equal opportunities within this Library, with the request that we provide the NAACP with

information regarding the number of negroes represented in each category of employment within the Cleveland Public Library.” The motion was approved unanimously.

President Thompson then turned to the prepared agenda. All proceeded smoothly until, he called for new business. At this point, Mr. Klonowski said that he wished to make a statement. This turned out to be another bombshell, also not on the printed agenda, and of course another big surprise for me and I am sure for most of the people in the Boardroom that day.

Mr. Klonowski said that he had something to say about who the Director of the Cleveland Public Library should be. He came right to the point and said, “I think we have the person right here in the Library who should be the Director and the Trustees could not find a better Director if they searched the country over. Mr. Edward D’Alessandro has worked in the Library for many years, he has worked with many Directors and other very important leaders of the Library before him. He has also worked in the various areas of the Library over the years and knows its operations. As Deputy Director, he has ably directed the affairs of the Library during Mr. Lindquist’s absences and since Mr. Lindquist’s retirement. I move that Mr. D’Alessandro be appointed Director of the Cleveland Public Library.” The motion was quickly seconded by Board member John Gardner.

I was in total shock. I had not been told before hand that an appointment would be made so soon when Lockwood Thompson, Stanley Klonowski and Florence Graham had convinced me to be a candidate for the job. Only a short time ago I had been left with the idea that a number of other candidates were to be interviewed.

Following the motion and its second, Board member Robert Merritt remarked that in his opinion the search for a new Director had not been as extensive and thorough as it should have been; that persons had not yet been interviewed who would like to be; and that only four persons other than the Acting Director had been interviewed. Mr. Merritt strongly urged the members of the Board to make no decision at the time and to follow the course which had been recommended by the Cleveland Board of Education. He said that he was not prepared to vote on such a motion and would abstain.

Mr. Merritt then moved that Mr. Klonowski’s motion be tabled for a further search for a Director. Mr. Thompson advised that a motion to table did not need a second, according to Robert’s Rules of Order. A roll-call was then taken on tabling the motion to appoint me. The motion for tabling failed with all the Board members with the exception of Mr. Merritt voting No.

Mr. Thompson then called for the roll call on the motion to appoint me as Director of the Cleveland Public Library. There were six yeas. Mr. Merritt abstained as he had said he would. Mr. Thompson declared that I was officially appointed as the new Director.

Mr. Livingston then presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Cleveland School Board has expressed its interest in the search for a qualified Director of the Cleveland Public Library System, and this interest has been communicated to the members of the Library



Board of Trustees with specific recommendations regarding its responsibilities in selecting a Director;  
 and without at any time requesting information from the duly elected officers of this Board or its membership, and  
 WHEREAS the Cleveland Board of Education is not sufficiently informed on projected plans for the Library System; the special factors related to the search for a Director; or, the peculiar tactics encountered, which resulted in the breaking of trust with candidates for the Directorship; and  
 WHEREAS the national image of the Cleveland Public Library has been marred by the breaking of faith relative to the confidentiality promised to candidates for the Directorship; and  
 WHEREAS it is not in the public interest to create an image of lack of faith between the Board of Education  
 and the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland Public Library System; therefore  
 BE IT RESOLVED: That the President of the Cleveland Public Library Board of Trustees communicate the  
 following to the Board of Education: On matters and issues of public interest related to the Library System,  
 The Board of Education should confer with the Library Board of Trustees with a view toward ascertaining all pertinent facts before issuing public statements, no matter how well intended, or taking official position on library matters.

Board member Arthur Heard moved for the adoption of the resolution. Florence Graham seconded the motion. Before there was a call for the question on the motion, Mr. Heard interjected that he had tried at the least five times to get the members of the Board of Education to meet informally with the Library Board of Trustees for discussions pertaining to matters concerning the Library without success. Mr. Klonowski added that he felt that once the Board of Education had appointed the members of the Library Board that it should have faith in its appointees!

Mr. Gardner then called for the question. President Thompson asked for the roll call. There were six yeas. Mr. Merritt again abstained from voting. The President then declared the motion carried.

So it was that I assumed the Directorship of the Cleveland Public Library on the 100th anniversary of the Cleveland Public Library, at a time that should have been one of great joy and jubilation not only for me but also for all concerned. Instead, I found myself being handed the reins at a time that gave me little cause for celebration. The mantle of leadership had been thrust upon me in a manner that I had not chosen nor expected and at a time of distrust and division between the Library Board of Trustees and its parent body the Board of Education. At the same time it appeared that a wedge had been driven into the unity that had existed in the membership of the Library Board. This did not bode well for the welfare of the Cleveland Public Library and for me. I must confess I was disheartened. That feeling filled me throughout the rest of the Board meeting.

At the close of the Board meeting. I was surrounded! Board members, Library staff and members of the media present congratulated me. This raised my spirits somewhat. However, after all had gone, I sank into my chair at my desk, mentally and physically, and emotionally drained. I sat there for well over an hour before I was able to get myself together to make the long drive home.

On my way home, I could not help reviewing all that had transpired that evening beginning with the charges that had been made by the NAACP. I must confess that in all the years I had been associated with the Cleveland Public Library, I had not paid much attention to the operations of the Personnel Department. From the time I had reached the management level, that is, from the time I became a Branch Librarian, on up the ladder, my jobs did not include any oversight of the operations of that department. That was the case even when I was Assistant Director and Deputy Director. In those positions, my specific responsibilities as described in my job descriptions were in the business and physical plant areas of the Library. The only two persons other than the Directors, and who as Assistant Directors had anything to do with personnel during my time in middle or upper management, who were specifically charged with any oversight over personnel were L. Quincy Mumford and Rose Vormelker. I could not bring myself to believe that they or anyone else connected with the Personnel Department would have condoned discriminatory personnel practices. Now that I was Director, I knew that I was going to make it my job to know what was going on in the Personnel Office and to make sure that never again would the NAACP or any other group be able to level the kind of charge that had been made. I was sure in my own mind that I would be able to handle any problems that might arise in that regard. I also had no fears about being able to successfully manage the administrative responsibilities of the Directorship because I had been doing so as Acting Director and because I knew I could rely on the many years of experience I had had in practically every aspect of the Library's work over the years.

What gave me real pause for thought was what was happening at the Board level. It was clear that the School Board was definitely bent on exercising control over the actions of the Library Board and it was also apparent that seeds of division had been sewn in the Library Board. You will recall that I alluded to School Board's first attempt to control earlier in this account when I reported the School Board's failed attempt to pressure the Library to continue funding School Library service when the County Budget Commission ordered that the School Board use its funds for that service. It was clear to me that since virtually all of the Library Board members were persons of principle and would not be controlled, that the School Board would try to gain control through its new and future appointees to the Library Board. I arrived home on the night of February 17, 1969 with that worrisome thought!

Once in the warmth and comfort of my home and family, I tried to put the best construction on what had happened that night, however, Grace and boys understood the implications of the situation as they congratulated me on my appointment. I must admit that it was not a night of celebration as it should have been! It was not until recently that I became aware of the impact that my homecoming on that evening had had on my family. Recently during a long distance telephone call with my son Paul, now a librarian at the Portland Public Library in Portland Maine. He recalled the feelings he had as a seventeen year old, regarding my appearance and state of mind when I arrived home that night.

When I returned to work the following day, I had made up my mind that I was going to make things work, to be the peace maker, to bring about unity in the Library Board and get both of the Boards to work cooperatively. The first test came during the March 1969 Library Board meeting when Mr. Livingston advised the Board that although the Board had unanimously approved to honor the NAACP's request in the February meeting for information regarding the number of blacks represented in each category of employment within the Cleveland Public Library,

that the propriety of that action had since been called into question by another member of the Library Board. He added that this required discussion.

Mr. Heard said that the Board had authorized the sharing of that information, and that there was no need for discussion. He continued, saying, "The minutes of the February 17 Board meeting records the motion made that we provide the NAACP with information regarding the number of negroes represented in each category of employment within the Cleveland Public Library, the vote was 7 yeas and 0 Nays. There should be no further discussion on the matter."

President Thompson asked me if the information was available. I replied that the Personnel Office had had to compile the information because the Library had not kept such information because of an existing law on the subject. I said that as ordered by the Board in its February 17 meeting the information had been presented to the Personnel Committee of the Board for its consideration. Mr. Livingston asked if there were questions of legality he would like to know what the question was.

Mr. Merritt then said the Library is a public institution which by law is required to treat all people equally and without discrimination and that one of the main thrusts of the civil rights movement has been to make it illegal to keep records based on race, creed or nationality. In fact, he said, The NAACP some years ago made a request to the Cleveland City School Board that it not keep statistics or tables on students by race creed or nationality. He said until he knew it was proper, he felt the information should be withheld.

Mr. Livingston then countered that the Library in fact, had not kept records by race or creed and that the information had to be gathered for this request. He added that there would be no such record keeping in the Library, that since the problem had been made public, the Library Board should want to answer the NAACP charges in the spirit in which they were made. He concluded, saying, "In honor we can face up to this challenge and be the stronger for it."

Mr. Merritt replied that it might well be that the Library's legal counsel might think giving such a list very proper and that the Board would not be criticized, that it would only be a matter of a few days to get a legal opinion.

Mr. Heard again reminded the members of the Board that a motion had been made, duly seconded and unanimously carried in a previous meeting, that the board provide the NAACP with the information. He did not feel that there should be any further discussion on the matter.

Mr. Merritt then moved that on receipt of an opinion from legal counsel that it is proper to do so, the required information should then be turned over to the NAACP. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Graham. Mr. Gardner, Mrs. Graham, Mr. Merritt and Mr. Thompson voted Yes. Mr. Heard and Mr. Livingston voted No. Mr. Klonowski abstained. President Thompson declared the motion carried.

The tone of the discussion of this matter and the four to two vote showed that I had been intuitive about what was happening to the Library Board. I now had evidence that there were going to be strong divisions within the Board, that it might be difficult to get unanimity on other matters in the future.

The morning following the Board meeting, I wrote a letter to Mr. Frank T. Corrigan, who was County Prosecutor

and the Library's legal counsel, seeking his opinion regarding the propriety of furnishing the information requested by the NAACP, as ordered by the Board. In order to save time, I telephoned Mr. Corrigan, explained the situation to him, and asked him if I could bring him the letter officially asking for his opinion on the matter sometime that afternoon. One might ask how could I have been so bold to intrude on a busy public official in that way, and on such short notice. I was able to do so because I had been able to win Mr. Corrigan's respect and friendship. From the time I assumed the responsibilities of Business Manager, I had not only made it a practice to seek his advice and counsel on matters that required that I do so, but also as he once told me, because I ran a tight ship when it came to the Library's budget, contracts and other business and financial matters. So when I called him on this problem, He agreed without hesitation to see me after lunch.

I hand carried my letter to Mr. Corrigan's office and presented it to him in person that afternoon. He was kind enough to consider my inquiry then and there. I filled him in on the details of the NAACP's request. He asked me whether the Library had made it a practice to keep the information requested. I replied in the negative, telling him that the Personnel Office had had to compile the information at the Board's request because of the law that prohibited the keeping of such records.

He summoned his secretary, dictated the following reply giving his official opinion immediately.

**OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF CUYAHOGA  
March 21, 1969**

*Mr. Edward A. D'Alessandro  
Director, The Cleveland Public Library  
325 Superior Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114*

*Dear Mr. D'Alessandro:  
This is to reply to your letter of March 21, 1969 wherein you ask whether or not the Library Board may release to the NAACP information indicating the number of people employed in the Cleveland Public Library who are negroes and according to their job classification.*

*While there is no requirement in the law that you designate the color, race, religion or national origin of any employee, if in fact you have such information, you may release this information to the NAACP.*

*I trust this answers your inquiry.*

*Yours very truly,  
/s/ John T. Corrigan  
Prosecuting Attorney*

After thanking Mr. Corrigan for the speedy manner in which he had handled our request, I decided to take his written opinion to Mr. Thompson for his perusal before sending it on to the NAACP as had been directed by the Library Board the day before. When I called Mr. Thompson's office luckily his secretary said she could get me

in to see him before the end of the work day, at five o'clock. I knew he would be pleased with the letter, however, upon reading the letter, I did not expect him to take another step in the matter. He directed me to instruct Dorothy Fechter, Clerk of the Board to call a Special Board meeting to present Mr. Corrigan's letter to the Board, to consider the letter and the release of employee information to the NAACP. I reminded him that the full Board had already done that in the March 20 meeting, and had instructed me to release the information upon receipt of Mr. Corrigan's approval. He insisted on having the special meeting any way. As I left his office, I was puzzled as to why he wanted to gild the lily as it were. I thought, why in the world would he want to bother the full Board again with something that had already been decided?

Before I got back to my office late that day, I had concluded that Mr. Thompson remembering the strong different opinions held by some of his associates on the subject, had become so sensitive about the matter, that he felt it necessary to rehash the matter again with his fellow Board members now that he had Mr. Corrigan's letter in hand.

The special Board meeting was held on March 27, 1969, with four of the seven members of the Board present, which constituted a quorum. Mr. Merritt, Mr. Klonowski and Mr. Gardner did not attend. Opening the meeting, Mr. Thompson asked me once again to present the statistical compilation on the composition of the staff as requested by the NAACP and to read the Board's motion on the request along with my letter to Mr. Corrigan and his response giving approval for the release of the information. Mr. Thompson then said that since there was no question that the information should be released he now wanted the Board's direction on how and to whom the information should be sent. At the same time, he asked Mr. Livingston if he thought that the statistics should be held until the Library could develop its Equal Opportunity Statement which also had been requested by the NAACP. Mr. Livingston replied in the negative, saying that they were two different things" One was in relation to the commitment the Board had made relative to providing the statistics requested, while the policy statement was for internal use. Whereupon Mrs. Graham moved that the information be transmitted to the Executive Secretary of the NAACP. Mr. Livingston seconded the motion. The four members present, Mrs. Graham, Mr. Heard, Mr. Livingston and Mr. Thompson were unanimous in their vote for transmitting the information, finally making it possible for me to send the information on to the NAACP, which I did without delay the next day. This was more evidence that this board would be keeping me on a merry-go-round!

Two weeks later another special meeting of the Board was called to consider the new bids received for the building of the new branch at University Circle, the revised costs that had been presented to the Board in an earlier meeting, and to award the necessary building contracts to the successful contractors.

In Calling the meeting to order, Mr. Thompson noted that Mr. Gardner, Mr. Livingston had indicated they could not be present, however, Mr. Merritt had not been heard from. Since Mrs. Graham, Mr. Heard, Mr. Klonowski, and he made a quorum, he said the meeting could proceed. He then asked me to refresh the Board's memory on what had gone before on the project and to present the bid tabulations.

I advised the board that the bids as readadvertised were duly received at 12:00 noon, April 2, 1969, opened and read by the Clerk-Treasurer in the presence of the Architect, members of the administration and contractors as required by law. I also advised that the resolutions for the awarding of the contracts were subject to the

acceptance by the contractors of an affirmative action program pertaining to equal opportunities, etc., as required by the Federal Government and acceptance of the contracts by the state Architect's office. I mentioned that the Ozanne Construction Company which had presented the base low bid had failed to submit a bid bond as required by the specifications and bidding documents. Since this had made its bid incomplete, it had been disqualified as required by law. I then presented the remaining low bids as submitted by the John E Cleary Construction Company and the Roediger Construction Company along with the Architect's recommendation.

As I was explaining the bid comparison sheet comparing the bids of the two companies, and the Architect's recommendation that the low bid of \$510,800.00 from the Roediger Construction be accepted, Mr. Merritt arrived.

Without having heard any of the details about the bids for the construction of the branch library building, Mr. Merritt said that he "was greatly concerned about inadequate parking facilities, difficulty of access, neighborhood safety factors, and the need for the Library as originally conceived." He further stated that in view of these concerns and also in view of the unexpected high cost of the proposed library building, he could not vote for building the University Circle Regional Branch Library. This took the rest of the Library Board by surprise. I could see the looks of amazement on their faces. I was at a loss to explain or understand this change in thinking on his part, when just two months ago, on February 17, he had voted to approve the building of the branch as proposed. Architect Ward advised Mr. Merritt that the low bid as presented by the Roediger Construction Company was well within the revised budget which the Board had asked for in an earlier meeting when the Board had had to reject all of the bids because they were all above the construction budget. Mr. Merritt was reminded that the Board had approved the revisions in plans and the read advertisement for bids for the job, that all had been done according to the direction of the full Board. Mr. Ward added that the revised budget now being presented would adequately cover the construction costs being presented as well as all other costs to complete the building. Mr. Ward assured Mr. Merritt that parking would be adequate, that access from East 107th Street posed no problem, and as for safety, the police station was nearby.

After much discussion, Mr. Klonowski asked that the Board members "get on with the business for which the meeting had been called and vote either 'yes' or 'no' on the matter." He said that the Board had already made decisions about the building of the new branch months ago, and had come together for action on the bids and that it was the only business that was to be conducted. He urged the Board members to come to some conclusion.

Mr. Heard moved that the proposed revision of the estimated budget for the construction of the branch as presented be adopted. Mr. Klonowski seconded the motion. Mrs. Graham, Mr. Heard, Mr. Klonowski, and Mr. Thompson voted yes. Mr. Merritt voted no. Mr. Gardner and Mr. Livingston were absent.

Taking one at a time, Mr. Heard then moved that the General trades contract be awarded to the Roediger Construction Company, the Plumbing contract to the Spohn Corporation, the Heating and Ventilating contract to the M. J. Kelly Company, and the Electrical contract to the Hoffman Electric Company. After each motion was duly seconded, they were all approved by a four to one vote. Mr. Merritt not voting in each case.

This was the second time in two months that Mr. Merritt had suddenly reversed himself on two very important matters to have come before the Board, taking very strong positions that were unnerving and disturbing for the

other Board members. These sudden reversals on his part gave me cause for worry as well, and were reinforcing my suspicions that he had come to the board with a preplanned agenda. Not too long after that meeting one of the Board members using a cliché told me that he thought that “there appeared to be method in Mr. Merritt’s madness.”

Be that as it may, I was determined that I was going to make things work, that I would do my best to implement the policies of the Board, develop Library programs and services that would benefit all the Library’s clientele, with the hope that I would continue to have the support of the majority of the Board.

I was pleased that the majority of the Board had approved the building contracts for the University Circle Branch and proceeded with the next steps that had to be taken. Since a large amount of the funding for the branch was coming from federal funds through the State Library as the administrator of Library Services and Construction Act funds, I had to arrange for the required pre-conference award meeting with Frank Baldau, representative of the federal offices in Chicago, the representatives of the State Library, the architect, and the successful contractors to instruct the contractors about the necessary affirmative action program to be submitted by them pertaining to equal employment opportunities and other requirements called for by the Federal Library Services and Construction Act. This had to be done before the State Library and the State Architect would approve the building contracts.

At the same time that all this was going on we had been able to put together the small but functional branch at the Garden Valley Housing Project that we had promised that community earlier in the year. The branch was officially opened for service on April 7, 1969 with a ribbon cutting ceremony that had been planned with the Neighborhood Leadership Committee under the direction of Ann Marie Minor. In attendance and officiating, were Richard Peters, Administrative Assistant to Mayor Stokes, Councilman Charles Carr, Irving Kriegsfeld, Director of the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority, Lockwood Thompson, President of the Library Board, Board members Florence Graham, Arthur Heard, and George Livingston. Several members of the Library staff joined me, along with many parents and their children, who could hardly wait for the Library to open. The Neighborhood Leadership Committee and parents provided refreshments. A huge cake appropriately decorated for the event was provided by the Quincy Savings and Loan, all of which made it a very festive occasion. This event received the following notice in the Cleveland Press of April 12, 1969:

#### Serving the Readers

Commendations are in order for Garden Valley residents and Cleveland Public Library officials. The citizens went to a Library Board meeting and asked that a special library branch be established in their area. The Library Board and administration responded by leasing two suites from the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority to bring books closer to the people.

Almost immediately, community response was very favorable. School class visits from the Charles Chesnutt and Anton Grdina elementary schools were scheduled. They were soon followed by adult education classes. Parents, children, and teachers kept saying, “We love it!”

As one who had come from a tenement myself, I could relate with the children especially in their feelings about

the library. As I look back and recall the excitement I shared with those youngsters so many years ago, I can't help wondering how that day may have changed their lives, as my life was changed back in 1925, when the Cleveland Public Library first came into my life. I wonder how many of those youngsters have been able to live better and fuller lives because of the Library. As I write this, I haven't been able to resist the urge to go to the Cleveland Telephone Directory to see if the Branch still exists. Sure enough, there it is in black and white, Garden Valley Branch, 7100 Kinsman Rd., telephone 623-69 76. It pleases me so much to see that it still has a place in the City Library's network after more than a quarter of a century.

As I glance down the current roster of Cleveland's Branch Libraries, I am also pleased to see that four other Branch Libraries that were established during my watch are still around doing their part in the cultural, educational and social life of the city. Yes, there they are, Martin Luther King Branch (formerly University Circle Regional Branch), at 1962 Stokes Boulevard, the Rockport Branch, at 4421 West 140th and Puritas Avenue, the Frank W. Walz Branch, at 7910 Detroit Avenue, and the Woodland Branch, at 5806 Woodland Avenue. All of them serve as happy reminders and mountain tops in my life and career as a librarian.

On June 12, 1969, I was able to take to the Board for approval bids that had been solicited for a Library Management Survey from a number of Management Consultant Firms. From the time I had become Business Manager of the Library system I had felt the need for a thorough in depth study of the Library's business and management organization and structure. The last study, known as the Carnovsky Appraisal had been done in 1939. It had been done by Leon Carnovsky, who was well known and well thought of in the national Library community. At the time, I was a young reference librarian in the Sociology Division of the Main Library. I recall that I was one of the junior staff members from that division called upon by Amy Winslow and Russell Munn who had been brought to the Library by Librarian Charles Rush to do some of the leg work in the gathering of information about the Main Library for the study. My supervisor, Alma Schultz had recommended me for the assignment, telling me that it would be good experience for me. It most certainly was so.

Overall, the Carnovsky Survey was perceived to have been a well done, comprehensive study of the entire library. It covered the administrative organization and structure of the Main Library and the branch libraries and the entire spectrum of the Library's services throughout the system. It made management recommendations for the top administrative offices, for the Main Library and the branches. It drew conclusions and made recommendations about personnel, the number of branches needed, areas over-served as well as those that were under-served, branches that should be relocated or eliminated, etc. The study resulted in a number of very important changes and improvements in the areas I have mentioned. I recall, however, that a number of the Branch Librarians felt strongly that the Carnovsky Surveyors had not been as thorough as they should have been in their study of the branch libraries and that the branches had suffered as a result of what some of the senior branch librarians described as a perfunctory look at their operations.

Since 1939, the Library had expanded with new branch library buildings and new services, all of which had resulted in added costs and problems that additional buildings and services bring. Since Carnovsky, salaries had gone up. Funds to meet salary demands had to be met by cutting the appropriations for books, periodicals, audio-visual materials as well as other appropriations. These had ballooned into major budgeting problems. World War II had brought staff shortages, which continued to be exacerbated by loss of positions that could not be filled



because of increased salary costs, and then by the loss of school library personnel when that personnel and the school libraries were taken over by the Board of Education. This personnel drain had made it virtually impossible to properly staff the Main Library and the branches during vacation times. In the past, school librarians had been used to fill in for Main Library and Branch staff when on vacation.

The Cleveland Public Library as a result had reached the stage in its history in 1969 when it needed to examine its organization, operations, programs and services in relation to costs. I felt that this should be done through a management study to be undertaken by an outside firm with the necessary expertise to study the following areas of the Library's operations in relation to its role in the County, State, and the nation:

Organization and use of personnel, with the aim of revising the Administrative Organization Chart to come up with a more effective table of organization. Personnel practices, hiring, assignment and deployment of staff, management and use of professional and nonprofessional staff throughout the Library. Business operations, accounting and budgeting procedures, Data Processing, purchasing, stockroom (supplies), cleaning, maintenance, garage, shops, book repair and preservation, book processing, mailing, printing, and delivery operations with a view to establishing cost and quality controls for these operations. Analysis of the use of space in the library's buildings with particular attention to function of the occupants. Examination of the behind the scene areas for more efficient arrangement and use. The need for more space.

The idea of having such a study had been approved by unanimous vote in the Library Board's regular meeting of March 20, 1969, and the above outline for the proposed study had been approved in a special meeting held May 28, 1969.

Now on June 12, in a special meeting called by President Thompson, I was asked by him to review the background information on the proposed management study and to present the bids received from the consultants who had submitted bids. I had prepared a written analysis of the bids that had been received two days before from Booz-Allen Hamilton, Inc., Ernst & Ernst, Alexander Grant & Company, Haskins and Sells, and Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Company, which I had hand delivered myself and reviewed in person with each of the Board members the day before the Board meeting as I had done before in other cases, at President Thompson's request, when he felt the need for quick and timely action by the Board.

I had no sooner completed my presentation of the bids in the meeting, indicating that funds would be forthcoming from the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation to cover the \$12,000 cost that had been presented as the lowest and firm bid by the Alexander Grant & Company, if we submitted our request for funds to the foundation no later than June 15, when Mr. Merritt spoke.

Mr. Merritt said that he could not vote on the Management Survey because he felt strongly that the Library should have a study that was larger in scope, that the study should be similar to the one made by Leon Carnovsky in 1939. He added that the Library might find that after it had done this management survey that it would want to do another covering the other aspects of the library, that our chances of getting additional funds

from the Foundation for such a survey would be impaired. He asked for the opportunity to see a copy of the Carnovsky survey, that he wanted to study it before he could vote on the proposed management study.

To say that the other Board members and I were again amazed and perplexed at this turn of events would be an understatement. I could not believe what I was hearing. Here was a man who in March without exception had participated in a unanimous vote giving me the authority to get bids on the basis of the proposal I had placed before the Board at that time, once again throwing a monkey wrench in the works.

I felt that it was my duty to remind him and the rest of the Board that approval had been given in the Board meeting of March 20, 1969, authorizing a management survey of the Library, with the specific idea of studying its table of organization, business functions, employment and use of personnel, space utilization, etc. I recall saying that under its existing organization the Library was not functioning well, that the Library was big business, that under its existing structure, it was impossible to administer in a cost effective manner. I emphasized that it was necessary to place the Library's budgeting and financial operations on a business like basis. I added that I did not feel that our request for funds would not be received favorably, that several years earlier the Library's Uniform Salary Study was underwritten by the Cleveland Foundation. In fact that salary study was funded in two steps, by two separate allocations totaling \$10,000.

Mr. Merritt said that he was not saying that the management study was not needed, he just wanted more time to go over everything, and to talk with the various management firms bidding on the study. He found in his experience that going into this sort of thing cold with the thought we might have to go back for funds for another study could jeopardize getting the funds, that this type of study might very well be a part of a more comprehensive study of the Library, which could up-date the Carnovsky Appraisal of 1939.

I reminded Mr. Merritt that the Cleveland Foundation had reacted favorably to our requests for funds in the past one way or the other, that if the Board were to decide to go for an appraisal similar to the larger Carnovsky project later on, I was sure that the foundation would look favorably on such a request as it had in the past with the salary studies. I continued saying that our immediate and urgent need was for a business and management study, that a Carnovsky type study would take more time, and cost more, probably about \$100,000, and a year or more to complete.

He responded, saying that the Friends of the Cleveland Public Library would help to secure the \$100,000 needed for a more comprehensive study, and it seemed to him that the Cleveland Foundation would be quicker to grant the full amount at one time rather than making two grants.

All I could say to this continued persistent, call for a larger study was that I had not understood that the Board had changed its mind about having the management study as had been approved in the Meeting of March 20. I would have to hear that from the full Board!

At this point, Mr. Heard asked, "how many Board members were present at the March 20 meeting?" Mr. Livingston replied that all seven members of the Board were present and voted unanimously on the management study. He said the Director had moved ahead according to the Board's directive after action taken in a previous meeting. He said if the Library, was going to have a complete comprehensive study made, it meant that the

Board should backup and take another look at the management study under consideration. He continued, saying, that the Director had spelled out the need for much needed changes within the Library's business activities and organization, and the urgency of the need to make these changes. He concluded by saying that the Board should listen to what the Director was trying to tell them.

President Thompson then asked me if the Library could find the \$12,000 to go ahead with the management study, with the idea of holding off requesting funds from the Foundation to do the rest of the Library study later. I replied that there was no extra money anywhere in the Library's budget to do so, that we did not have to look elsewhere for the funds, that I had had assurances that the Cleveland Foundation would supply the funds.

Mr. Heard said the management survey as proposed offered much value to the Library; that the Board had come together to "put the whole ball of wax together and should move forward on it." He said, "now the Board members come back for another session and do not know what they had passed previously. We seem to change our minds often lately. When we vote now, we'll have to raise our right hand and say on Scout's honor we won't change our minds again."

With that, President Thompson asked the members if they wanted to meet again next Thursday, the day of the regular meeting. Mr. Heard advised that he did not mind how often he was asked to come to the Library, however, some members never seem to be able to make it on time, and then end up making lengthy dissertations and the Board does not accomplish much; if when the Board comes together to conduct business he said he did not have time to waste listening to long speeches that bring about no results. He was looking at Mr. Merritt as he said this.

It was now clear more than ever that there were two factions on the Board, that I would have my hands full, just trying to keep peace, and at the same time try to get things done in future Board meetings, and to keep the Library moving forward.

Mr. Livingston was the one who helped bring closure to that very unproductive meeting of June 12 by calmly saying that the Director and the administrative staff had spent many hours going over in detail with management firms the scope of the management survey before the bids were presented to the Board for consideration. President Thompson picked up the cue, saying that he was somewhat embarrassed as a Board member to have given directives to the Director, and then to scrap them.

I then asked President Thompson what I should say to the firms who had bid on the management study? Mr. Heard cautioned the members to make it very clear what they expected the Director to do, as he himself certainly did not know what the Board was trying to tell the Director. I recall that this statement must have unnerved Mr. Thompson. He did not answer my question, He either lost his train of thought or forgot. I did not push it.

Mr. Livingston continuing to try to bring the meeting to an end then said that since the board was present as a quorum he moved that the Director be empowered to talk with the Assistant Director of the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation relative to the possibility of having a comprehensive study of the Library and its services and that a new date be established for a hearing and that any assistance which could be provided by the Foundation in developing the proposal be provided to the Director.

Mr. Heard seconded the motion. The members present, Mr. Heard, Mr. Livingston, Mr. Merritt, and Mr. Thompson voted yes. Mr. Gardner, Mrs. Graham, Mr. Klonowski were absent. I was now headed back to the drawing board.

I have said that my recollection was that Mr. Thompson did not answer my question as to what I should tell the firms that had bid on the management survey I had proposed. My review of the Minutes of the Special Meeting dated June 12, 1969 verify my recollection. There is no indication there that my" question was answered. I recall calling each of the Board members the next day and got their approval by telephone to notify the firms that had bid that the Board had decided not to proceed with the survey as originally advertised. I promptly wrote each company a courtesy letter to that effect, for the record, indicating the Board's and my thanks for their bids.

If I had had any doubts before about what was happening to the esprit de corps of the Board, they were completely dispelled by this most recent performance. Also any doubts I might have had about the divisive feelings that existed between some members of the Board, they too had been dispelled.

It was around this time that I also discovered that Mr. Merritt was having meetings with a few members of the Library staff at his home from time to time. A staff member who had been invited to his home for one of those meetings advised me that it was personally disturbing for her because she felt that it was unethical for Mr. Merritt as a Board member to be hiding secret meetings with selected staff members about Library matters behind the backs of the other members of the Board and the Library Administration, and decided that I should know about it. To this day, when I recall receiving that troubling bit of unsolicited knowledge, I wish as I did then that the information had been withheld from me. I was deeply saddened. I not only felt sad but betrayed. From that moment on I knew that my work in the Cleveland Public Library was going to be an up-hill battle. There was no longer any doubt in my mind that there was a counter agenda at work.

This was another one of those times that I wished that father was still around for me 'to consult. Since he was not, all that I could do was to remind myself again of those times when he would urge me to persevere in particularly difficult situations by saying, "Once you have begun to dance, you must finish the dance!" Those were the words I kept repeating to myself that evening as I left the office for home after one of the most unproductive and sorriest Board meetings of my library career.

As directed by the board, I lost no time in arranging for a meeting with Dr. James Norton, Director of the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation about the Board's change of mind and desire to have a comprehensive study of the Library and its services and the possibility of funding from the Foundation. He graciously agreed to see me on June 19, 1969 at 9:00 A.M. I recall taking Fern Long my deputy with me so that I would have a witness to the proceedings. Dr. Norton had asked his assistant Mrs. Barbara Rawson to join us in the meeting on the morning of June 19.

I carefully outlined in detail for Dr. Norton and his aide what had taken place up to that point in time on the management survey that I had proposed and the Board's discussion and its decision to opt for a wider survey, that I should seek his thinking on the matter along with his thoughts on the possibility of funding for it from the Foundation. A thorough discussion followed. Both Dr. Norton and Mrs. Rawson were interested in the bids which had been submitted by the firms on the management survey that the Foundation had encouraged earlier.

They continued to agree that what they called a “nuts and bolts” survey of library’s business management needed to be made, and the large question remained as to whether it should come before or after the broader survey.

The conference ended with Dr. Norton indicating that the Foundation was still interested in the production of a business management survey and would even consider a broad survey of library functions and operations. He expressed a strong feeling that time of Library staff must be invested in both studies. He also advised that he believed that the Friends of the Cleveland Public Library must invest both effort and funds in both undertakings if they were to be successful, that the goals of the Library should involve both public and private cooperation and funding. The understanding now was clear that two types of survey were under consideration: the shorter term management survey and the long-term management survey.

Miss Long and I were agreeably surprised and so pleased when in discussing the time table for submission of the proposals for each of the surveys to the Foundation for funding, Dr. Norton suggested that the proposal for the short-term administrative management survey be submitted first, by September 1, 1969 for consideration at Foundation’s October distribution meeting, and the proposal for the broader study be submitted as a second and separate proposal by November 1, 1969, in time for the December distribution meeting.

It was almost noon when Miss Long and I left Dr. Norton’s office and hurried back to our offices. We had to get ready for the regular monthly Board meeting scheduled for that afternoon at 4:00 P.M. I must confess that I felt vindicated that afternoon as I wrote my report of our meeting with Dr. Norton, vindicated because he had reacted to our request as I had predicted and advised Mr. Merritt and the rest of the Board earlier. Dr. Norton had not only agreed with my position that the need for a management survey was the more immediate need but also had advised us to seek the funds for that survey from the Foundation for it first, and then to seek the funds to do the larger survey later.

And so it was, at the June 19, 1969 regular Board meeting, only seven days after the horrendous special meeting of June 12, I read a one page factual report of our successful meeting with Dr. Norton and Mrs. Rawson. I must confess that although “I told you so” thoughts filled my mind at the time, I am proud to say that I resisted the temptation to even hint at it in that report. In writing this account, I went back to consult the Minutes of the June 19 Board Meeting to check my report on page 238 and the following pages to see how the members of the Board reacted to my report. There were none! The top of page 239 carries the following closing statement: “The Director said that he thought the Board would be interested in the kind of thinking that was evident in the interview with Dr. Norton.” My report was received and accepted without comment. The record shows that we proceeded to other matters on the agenda.

I am sorry to report that not too long afterward, Lockwood Thompson resigned from the Library Board. Mr. Thompson had served long, well and honorably on the Board. He had also served his country, city and his state well and with honor. He had served as an officer in the armed forces in World War II, as a lawyer in the city, and as Chief Counsel for the Ohio Turnpike Commission. He was a member of an old, well known Cleveland family. He was a book man, a true scholar and always a gentleman. He was the last of the old time Board members. His leaving saddened me. I knew that I was going to miss him. His leaving created a second vacancy on the Board. Mrs. Florence Graham had passed away earlier after an extended illness.

A special meeting was called on July 24, 1969, at which time Mr. Murray Davidson, well known civic leader from the University Circle Area was appointed by the School Board to replace Mrs. Graham, and the Board elected Arthur Heard to replace Lockwood Thompson as President of the Board. This still left the Library with a six member Board. It appeared the Cleveland School Board was taking its time filling the vacancy created by Mr. Thompson's resignation. This was cause for worry because it threatened our ability to have the necessary quorums to hold Board meetings.

This was a special worry because of the number of projects that were ongoing at the time, the most important of which was the construction of the University Circle Regional Branch Library which was getting under way, and which would be requiring Board action on the proposals for furnishing and equipping the building, proposals that were in the offing.

By August of 1969, in line with the advice and encouragement of Dr. James Norton of the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation on June 19, I was able to present my management survey to the Board in a special meeting on August 28, 1969. This time the five members of the Board who were present voted unanimously to submit the proposal to the Foundation by September 1, with the provision that a subsequent proposal for a study of the Library's role, services, collections and plans for the future be submitted to the Foundation by December 1, as a second phase, as Dr. Norton had suggested. Ironically, Mr. Merritt was absent, as he had been for the meetings of June 19 and July 24. The Board Minutes of the regular meeting of September 18, 1969 indicates that he abstained from voting on the approval of the minutes of the three meetings because he was absent during those meetings. Nevertheless we were finally on the way to getting our much needed management study.

A proposal that had been brought to Mr. Heard's attention shortly after he was elected President of the Board, was the need for an all-day retreat of Board members, administrative staff, professional and nonprofessional members of the staff. This meeting would be for the purpose of reviewing question areas and the development of new library programs, etc. Mr. Heard rose to the occasion and brought it before the Board in the September 18, 1969 regular meeting. I was so pleased because he insisted that it be the first item on the agenda, and because I saw the retreat as being a way to bring the Board and the staff together thereby improving staff/Board relations and also as a means of improving not only the esprit, de corps of the staff but also of the Board itself. It was I thought a way to bring healing to the Board and a closer, healthier working relationship between the Board and the staff as a whole.

I remember that Mr. Heard made an eloquent presentation of the proposal. I have gone back to the Board Minutes of September 18, 1969 to review what he said at the time. My rereading of it again after almost thirty years has again impressed me so much so that I have felt it necessary to reproduce it in this account.

This is what he said:

The Cleveland Public Library system is faced with many challenges as to its continued existence as one of the leading institutions of its kind in the nation. During the past year we have witnessed the raising of

many- questions regarding the survival of our system as a first-rate institution. Foremost among our problems is inadequate funding to provide the level of staff and services needed in this community. There is a growing problem relative to the need for changing services to relate to a changing population. Additionally, there are changing service needs in our complex of educational institutions and industrial enterprises.

The Cleveland Public Library system has demonstrated an awareness of some of our needs related to library' services. The past year has evidenced a fine effort to meet new challenges. New service modes were developed to serve low income neighborhoods, and a growing reading public of commuters. 'Programs evolved which relate to special service needs of the economically disadvantaged and the Spanish speaking population. A regional library to serve both the public and the educational complex of the University Circle area is now under construction. We received Title WB funds which enabled us to expand the work of the Hospital and Institutions Department. We received Federal Funds for continuing the Books /Jobs Project, Project Libros, the Afro-American Literature Project, and to aid in building our new branch. The Friends of the Cleveland Public Library came through in their usual meritorious manner in numerous ways. In addition to these vital steps, plans are under way to develop a management study and an appraisal of the library system and its relevance to the needs of our city. The Library Board, Administration and staff are to be commended for their efforts. None of the progressive programs undertaken could have been successful without the cooperation of all segments of the Library system. It is my thinking that we should continue in a cooperative and progressive direction. There are still areas which should be explored for further planning and possible program development. Among the several areas of concern brought to my attention during the

past year are the following:

*Closer relationship between Board and personnel related to planning.*

*Development of a comprehensive community relations program.*

*Development of new systems for delivery of service for the inner city.*

*Special service programs for the elderly.*

*Meeting the special needs of industry for technological information.*

*Greater coordination of services with universities and other library systems.*

I am proposing that the Cleveland Public Library system hold an all-day retreat of Board members, professionals, and administrative staff (including all heads of departments). This meeting would be for the purpose of reviewing question areas and would relate to future program development of the Library system.

further propose the development of a committee comprised of Board members and personnel to effect planning and development of an agenda for the retreat.

I was most pleased that the four members present, Mr. Davidson, Mr. Heard, Mr. Livingston, and Mr. Merritt

voted unanimously for the proposal. I know that the absent members, Mr. Gardner and Mr. Klonowski, would have also voted for the proposal had they been there.

I was so happy that this Board meeting had started on a positive note, because later on in the meeting during that portion of the meeting known as the Director's Report, I had the unhappy task of reporting some unpleasant news about the Library's budget allocation for the next year. The Cuyahoga County Budget Commission had held its annual Budget Hearing on August 22, 1969, which had taken a different turn for the first time in a number of years. The Commissioners had dispensed with the usual opening statements from the nine library systems supported by Intangible Tax funds.

For the first time in years the members of the Budget Commission had asked questions about our individual library budgets while a tape recorder recorded our testimony. Mr. Frank Brennan as Chairman of the Commission advised us that our testimony was being taped in the event that the budget allocations might be appealed. It appeared as though the Commission expected that the allocations were going to be appealed or else had a premonition that appeals were in the offing. Expectation or premonition, appeals became a reality.

When I received word of the Commission's allocations, I advised the Board that in making its allocations for the year 1970, the Commission had allocated the Cleveland Public Library \$7,681,927, that this was only \$237,800 short of the total request of \$7,919,727. This, however, was not bad because this provided an increase of \$901,927 over the 1969 allocation of \$6,780,000, or 79 percent of the increase requested. The bad news was that our neighboring library the Cuyahoga County Library was planning to appeal its allocation to the State Board of Tax Appeals, thus placing the allocations to the Cleveland Public Library and the other library systems in the county in jeopardy. In making its allocation to the Cuyahoga County Library the Budget Commission had taken into consideration the \$1,200,000 income that would accrue to the County Library from its half-mill levy that the County Library had decided to place on the upcoming November 4 election day. In addition the County Library grieved that its allocation of \$3,817,906 for 1970 only allowed it an increase of \$94,006 instead of \$501,000 which was expected. Mr. Lewis Naylor, Director of the Cuyahoga County Public Library had advised me that his Board planned to appeal its allocation by October 10, with the understanding that its appeal would be withdrawn if its levy passed.

To say that this turn of events placed the Cleveland Public Library Board and me in a difficult situation is a gross understatement. We were faced with the choice of either being a defendant in the County Library's appeal, or to also appeal which would make us a litigant against the Budget Commission, which I felt to be precarious because I believed that the Commission had dealt with the Cleveland Public Library fairly. Upon finishing my report, President Heard asked that a letter be written to Mr. John T. Corrigan the Library's legal counsel to ascertain the library's legal rights in this situation since Mr. Corrigan as a member of the Budget Commission would be in an adversarial position should we appeal and hence could not serve as our legal counsel in the case. Mr. Heard wanted to know if we could hire outside counsel, and what would be our deadline for filing our appeal?

I advised Mr. Heard that we had been through the appeal process twice in previous years, that in each case, Mr. Corrigan had advised that we could appeal under the law, that he had given us permission to hire and pay for outside counsel from tax funds because he could not act as our counsel as a party in the litigation; that the law also



gave us thirty days from the official certificate of notice of the Commission's allocation. Nonetheless, Mr. Heard insisted that a letter be written requesting the information again in writing. Following the Board meeting, I asked Dorothy Fechter, Clerk-Treasurer to write the letter to Mr. Corrigan requesting the same information again, which was done the next day.

On September 23, 1969, a letter was received from Mr. Abe Braun, Mr. Corrigan's assistant in response to our letter to Mr. Corrigan concerning Mr. Heard's questions. Mr. Braun reiterated that we had the legal right to appeal the Budget Commission's allocation for 1970 according to Section 5 705.3 7 of the Revised Code of Ohio, that the Prosecutor's office could not represent the library if we appealed, that as we had in the past, we could hire and pay for outside counsel to represent us in our appeal according to Section 309.10 of the Revised Code, that the deadline for the Library to appeal the decision of the Budget Commission would be thirty days after the receipt of the notification of the budget allocation to the Library, which in our case had been September 15, 1969, thus making our deadline October 15.

Upon receipt of Mr. Braun's letter, I sought informal opinions from Mr. Jerome Curtis, and Mr. Arthur Petersilge, the attorneys who had represented the Library in our previous successful appeals before the Ohio State Board of Tax Appeals. They had managed in each case to win the additional funds that we had sought from the Budget Commission because we initially had received unsatisfactory allocations. They advised we should defend our allocation, whether as an appellee which we would be in the Cuyahoga County Library's appeal or by filing an appeal, which would mean that the Library would be contesting the allocation by the Commission, that is if the Cleveland Public Library Board was insisting upon its complete budget request of \$ 7,919, 72 7. This would mean that the Cleveland Public Library would be listing the other library systems and municipalities as appellees or defendants, just as the Cuyahoga County Library had done in listing the Cleveland Public Library and the other libraries as such in their suit. In our case we would be saying that the \$237,800 we had not received in the original allocation should be forthcoming from the allocations of the other libraries, along with the \$183,004 that had been allocated to the municipalities.

Armed with this information, and Mr. Braun's letter in hand, I recall arranging to see President Heard at his office where I gave him a thorough briefing, whereupon he asked that I have the Clerk of the Board issue a call for a special meeting to be held on Monday September 29, 1969 at 3:15 P.M., first, to consider filing a notice of appeal with the Ohio State Board of Tax Appeals, second, to request the Board of Education as the taxing authority of the Cleveland Public Library to file the appeal on behalf of the Library, third, to hire outside counsel to prepare and conduct the Library's case, or if the Board's decision should be not to appeal, to consider hiring outside counsel to defend our position as appellee, which the Library would be under the County Library's appeal. Mr. Heard added the latter consideration because he had remembered that in the regular meeting of September 18, I had informed the Board that I was reluctant to advise the Board to take the appeal route because the Budget Commission had given the Cleveland Public Library the lions share in the 1970 allocation. We had been allocated almost a million dollar increase (\$901,92 7) over the previous year's allocation, 79 percent of the increase we had requested, that I felt that the best course would be to endorse the County Library's levy, that the passage of its levy would help not only the Cleveland Public Library but also the other library systems in the county. I had felt that we would be more successful defending our allocation than trying to exact the additional \$237,800

that the Commission had denied us, and or going after the \$183,004 that had been allocated to the municipalities, that there was a possibility that we might be cut even more should we come out at the short end of an appeal.

In the Special meeting of September 29, Mr. Klonowski alone spoke strongly against filing an appeal. His motion to that effect failed. Mr. Merritt taking the leadership in the matter advised that the Cleveland Public Library should ask for the full amount, \$7,919,727.

Mr. Livingston asked, "what could happen if all libraries appealed their allocations and asked for the full 100 percent when we know that there are not enough dollars to provide 100 percent of each library's request?" Mr. Merritt said, "the only amount there is to appeal for is the \$183,004 allocated to the municipalities, that the Cleveland Public Library in appealing its allocation is really nothing more than saying to the other libraries that the Cleveland Public Library is protecting its interests."

Following Mr. Merritt's lead, the Board in its wisdom decided to take the appeal by" a four to two vote. Messrs. Davidson, Gardner, Heard and Merritt voted yes, and Messrs. Klonowski and Livingston abstained from voting after having continued to question the wisdom of going the appeal route.

When it came to the hiring of outside counsel to prepare and conduct the Library's case, Mr. Gardner moved that former Board member Lockwood Thompson be hired. Mr. Merritt took the position that Mr. Thompson would not have the time to devote to the task because of his full time job as counsel for the Ohio Turnpike Commission.

I reminded the Board that Mr. Jerome Curtis and Mr. Arthur Petersilge had successfully handled the Library's two previous appeals before the State Board of Tax Appeals. Mr. Merritt interjected that he knew a Thomas V. Koykka of the firm of Arter & Hadden who had worked with William Burton when he had represented the Library in the Public Employees Retirement case before the Supreme Court some years before. Mr. Merritt said that he knew Mr. Koykka personally, that he was an outstanding attorney, that he could handle this case, that he understood from Mr. Koykka that Mr. Burton would aid him in the case. He continued saying that he recommended that the Board consider Mr. Koykka.

At this point Mr. Gardner reminded the Board that his motion for securing Lockwood Thompson for the job had not been considered. Whereupon Mr. Livingston seconded the motion. Mr. Gardner, Mr. Klonowski and Mr. Livingston voted for Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Davidson, Mr. Heard and Mr. Merritt voted against him. Being a tied motion, it failed.

Mr. Livingston then suggested that the Board consider the attorneys that I had mentioned. Before any discussion could occur on Mr. Livingston's suggestion, Mr. Merritt suggested that the Board defer the matter temporarily and retire as a Committee of the Whole to discuss the matter further. Mr. Heard immediately said that the Board was conducting business in an open meeting, open to the public, that he felt that the Board did not want the public to think that it had to go behind closed doors to handle its business. Mr. Davidson then quickly moved that Mr. Thomas V. Koykka of the firm Arter & Hadden be hired to act as counsel for the appeal. Mr. Merritt seconded the motion. Mr. Gardner and Mr. Klonowski voted no. Mr. Livingston abstained. Mr. Davidson, Mr. Heard and Mr. Merritt voted yes. The motion carried, making Mr. Koykka the Library's attorney to carry forward the appeal. The die was cast.

There being no further business on the agenda, President Heard declared the meeting adjourned at 4:15 P.M. As the Board members, members of the public, and staff who had been in attendance left the board room that afternoon, as expected, reporters from the newspapers, radio and TV who had covered the meeting surrounded me. They wanted me to elaborate on why I had been reluctant to advise the Board to take the appeal route. My reply was simple, “you have heard my reasons in the meeting. My job now is to begin the appeal process as the Board has directed!”

When the room had cleared, I returned to my desk to begin planning the steps that I needed to take to get the appeal ball rolling. As I reached in my top desk drawer to get a legal size pad to begin writing, I felt so tired. I decided to rest for a while. I recall looking at the clock on the wall. It was a few minutes before 5:00 P.M. I decided to close my eyes and relax. I fell asleep sitting upright in my chair out of sheer exhaustion. When I awakened, I looked at the clock again. It was 5:30 P.M. I felt more tired than before, in fact I did not feel well at all. I decided it was time to call it a day’, so I put all my paper work away in my desk, said good night to my secretary, Mrs. Addis and started for home. The drive home that evening seemed so long. I have often thought of that tiresome drive home in the quarter of a century or more that has elapsed and wondered why I did not realize then as I do now that my body was beginning to warn me that I had been burning the candle at both ends without let-up for the past thirteen years.

I arrived home that night completely worn out. Grace took one look at me and urged me to call one of my doctor brothers. I told her that all I needed was a good night’s sleep and I’d be fine. I went to bed that night without having supper. The next morning I awoke feeling a little worn but well enough to go back to work., at which time I met with Fern Long and Dorothy Fechter and got to work on planning our appeal and beginning the arduous task of gathering the necessary documentary ammunition and exhibits that would be required by the attorneys.

The three of us along with a number of department heads and Branch Librarians worked long hours on that task. Our cooperative efforts made it possible for me to inform the Board in the next regular Board meeting on October 27, 1969 that we had been able to meet all of the informational needs of the Library’s attorneys and that they had completed the Cleveland Public Library’s Notice of Appeal and that it had been filed with the Board of Tax Appeals and all parties involved by October 13, two days before the deadline. I was able to give each of the Board members copies of the Notice of Appeal. I also advised the Board that Dorothy Fechter and I had met with the attorneys on October 23 to talk about avenues to follow in the tax appeal pending the outcome of the Cuyahoga County Library tax levy and about the problems that would confront both libraries in presenting the tax appeals should the Cuyahoga County Library tax levy fail. At the same time I gave each Board member a copy of a letter from the library attorneys dated October 22, covering the lawyers’ examination and views of the problems they had been alerted to.

I also advised the Board that I continued to feel strongly that the Cleveland Public Library should go on record as approving and endorsing the Cuyahoga County Library Tax levy which was to appear on the November ballot, because I felt that it was to the best interest not only of the Cleveland Public Library but also all the other libraries in the county. I reminded the Board that the County Library had indicated they would stop their appeal process if its levy passed providing it with the additional \$1,200,000 it required for the year 1970. I had prepared a brief resolution to that effect, which I had given to President Heard before the meeting. He asked Mr. Merritt to present

the resolution. There being no question among the Board members about going on record as being in favor of the County Library's tax levy, Mr. Klonowski moved that the resolution be adopted and sent to the County Library. Mr. Livingston seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At the same meeting, I was able to report several pieces of good news to the Board. I was pleased to be able to advise the Board that the University Circle Regional Branch was 50 percent completed. I had been going out to the construction site every day, a habit I had formed when I became Business Manager and began to personally watch the progress of the renovation of the old Plain Dealer Building as a library annex, a practice that was not only a learning experience for me, but also occasionally enabled me to catch errors in construction before it was too late. I had learned to read blue prints and specifications. This made it possible for me to stop and have corrected parts of construction that were not according to the blueprints or the specifications. As a result, I had been able to catch things that were not according to hoyle from time to time.

This time, I was able to tell the Board that the metal roof deck of the new branch was scheduled to be installed during the week of October 27; that the aluminum window frames were to be delivered and installed during the week of October 27; that the exterior masonry was scheduled to be completed by November 1 that the built-up roofing was scheduled to start November 3; that the mechanical equipment for the mechanical equipment room had been delivered to the job site and that installation was to begin as soon as the roof was installed; that not only were the electrical contractors on schedule, but also overall progress was on schedule; and finally that the general contractor had set April 23, 1970 as the date for final completion of the building.

Before the Board meeting I had received word from the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation that its Board had approved a grant of \$55,000.00 from its A. E. Converse Fund in response to our request for that amount to underwrite the cost of the Management Survey that had been approved by the Board in the Spring of the year. I had passed the word on to President Heard so that he could have the pleasure of making the announcement in the Board meeting. I was pleased at the manner in which he announced it. These were his words"

As President of the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland Public Library, I am happy to announce that the Library has been awarded a grant of \$55,000.00 from the A. E. Converse Fund of the Cleveland Foundation.

This grant makes possible the Management Survey which the Board approved some months ago. The

Survey will be made with the aid of a professional consultant firm working with the close cooperation

of the Library Board and staff members. We see this Survey as a first step towards improving the organization, structure, basic functions and services of this great library thus making it possible to enter the

Library's second century of Books, Information and Service with a real leap into to the future.

I recall Mr. Klonowski saying that this was the best news yet. He then made a motion to send the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation the Board's "Heartiest blessings and thanks." Mr. Merritt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. It was then my pleasure to present the bids that I had received earlier from five

management consultant firms. After I had presented detailed analyses of the five bids and shown that the lowest, best and most responsible bid had been submitted by Booz, Allen & Hamilton, Inc., I recommended that it be commissioned to conduct the Survey. At that President Heard urged the Board to accept my recommendation.

Mr. Merritt then moved that Booz, Allen & Hamilton, Inc. be commissioned to conduct the Management Survey of the Library, and that the Survey be started as soon as possible. The motion was seconded by Mr. Livingston, and was passed unanimously. With this I breathed a sigh of relief. We had finally gotten over the Management Survey hurdle, and were finally on the way to getting what we had recommended in March of the year.

The month of November in 1969 was to usher in one of the saddest and most traumatic periods of my life and in the life of my family. On November 16, after lunch, I had just finished preparing the agenda and all the exhibits for the next regular Board meeting scheduled for November 20, when I had a telephone call from Grace. She was calling me from Metro General Hospital to tell me that her sister had passed away. She tearfully told me that Edna who had been fighting the battle of breast cancer for several years had taken a turn for the worse just hours before and had been taken to the hospital before noon. Edna was Grace's younger and only sister. She had been a business career person, living in Buffalo, New York for many years when she was first diagnosed with the disease. After her surgery and cancer treatments she had done well in her physical and mental comeback for about nine years. By Spring of 1969, the cancer had struck again this time with such severity as to make it impossible for her to cope with it alone in Buffalo. At that time Edna had come to live in our home in Cleveland in order that Grace could take care of her. Although she had the best of care possible in our home, the disease continued to take its deadly toll.

I can't say that Edna's death came as a shock on that November afternoon. Grace, the boys, Edward and Paul, and I knew right along that it was inevitable. We had sorrowfully watched her deteriorate until she was a mere shadow of herself over the months that she was with us. The boys who loved their Aunt Edna so very much, were especially moved and affected by her decline. Although her death was expected, it was a blow to all of the family, as a loved one's passing always is, no matter when or the circumstances.

Since Grace had accompanied Edna to the hospital in the ambulance, I informed my secretary about the situation. I asked her to inform the Acting Deputy Director, the staff, and the members of the Library Board that I was taking leave for the next few days, that I had to leave immediately to pick up my wife at the hospital and then to help her make the necessary funeral arrangements, etc.

Needless to say, I was away from work on November 20, the day of the regular Board meeting because that was the day of Edna's funeral. Fern Long, as Acting Deputy Director filled in for me at the meeting. The Board meeting minutes for that day, indicates that Miss Long reported my absence by saying that it was only the second time in thirteen years that I had missed a Board meeting!

I was pleased that at the close of her report of the month's items of interest for the Board to note, that Miss Long also featured some excellent publicity we had been able to arrange with the Cleveland Transit and the Shaker Rapid Transit systems. She showed the Board members a sample of the Car Card which was to appear in 163 CTS and Shaker Rapid Transit vehicles from November 22 to December 22 in honor of the first birthday (November 25) of the Terminal Mini Branch that we had installed in the Union Terminal Concourse the year before. The

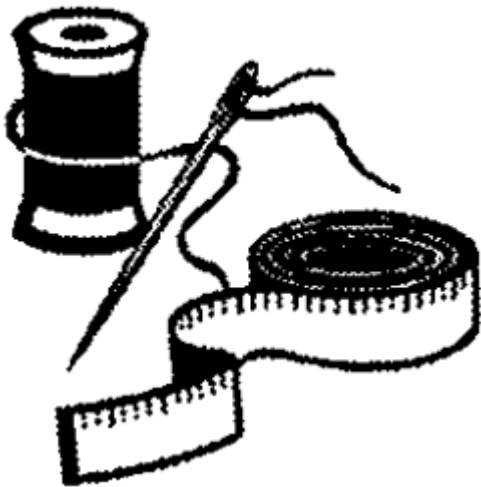
artwork for the cards had been done by Miss Rebeccah Ball of the Publicity and Exhibits Department, and the silk screen work by Milton Grant Silk Screen Studio. All the expenses for the car cards were funded by a Special Gift.

I returned to work on November 21, the day after the funeral, looking forward to the holidays, and to bringing to a close in the remaining month of 1969 a very successful centennial year. It had not only been a successful year of celebrating the Library's one hundred years but also successful from the standpoint of projects accomplished. Much had been done during the year 1969!

Uppermost on my plate when I returned to work on November 21, besides contending with the usual paper work and oversight of the construction of the University Circle Regional Branch Library, and the preparation of specifications and contracts for many other Library requirements for the new year, such as the bookbinding contract, etc., was the continuing work required in providing the attorneys the necessary exhibits and the evidence needed for the tax appeal. The entire Library had been mobilized to do this work.

I would be doing a grave injustice to my co-administrators and the entire staff of the Library if I neglected to record here the yeoman service they all performed in connection with the prosecution of the case in what had become a cause celebre in the local, state and national Library community.

Around mid November we had heard that the Board of Tax Appeals was to hear our case on December 17 and 18. We had entered the most intensive period of our preparation for the hearing. Foolishly I was trying to keep up with all the other routine work connected with my office at the same time trying to take care of my share of the Tax Appeal load. This meant I was working 12 to 14 hour days at the office and taking a brief case full of work home at night and working until one and two o'clock in the morning.



## Chapter 26. It All Caught up with Me as the Centennial Year Came to an End

On Friday, November 28, 1969, it all caught up with me! Around mid afternoon while at work at my desk, I felt nauseated, a numbness in my left arm, and a tingling sensation in my extremities. I began to perspire profusely, and felt as though I was having a severe bout of indigestion. I wanted to get home as quickly as possible. I telephoned Val Sopko the Library Chief Engineer. Fortunately he was in his office. I recall that Val wanted to take me to Fairview General Hospital which not too far from my home. Not realizing the seriousness Of my condition, I insisted that he drive me home. He got me home in record time. And again, Val, bless his soul (he has since passed away), stayed until Grace called Doctor Art. Well, you guessed it, he advised that I be taken to the hospital right away! Yes, I was having a coronary and did not know it or maybe I did not want to admit it. I kept saying to myself, I can't be having a heart attack. It's only indigestion. I was taken to Fairview General Hospital right away. The Doctors there after performing the required tests confirmed that I had had a heart attack.

My brothers, Doctor Art and Doctor Nick arrived later that day to check on me. After examining me and conferring with the hospital doctors, they gently chided me on having delayed getting to the hospital, telling me that I should have gone directly to the hospital from the Library as Val had advised in the first place.

I seemed to make enough of a recovery to be discharged from the hospital by the middle of December. I was told by my doctors to recuperate at home at least until after the first of the New Year before thinking of going back to work part-time.

It so happened that the first day of the Library's hearings before the Board of Tax Appeals fell on December 17. There I was at home recuperating from a heart attack unable to participate. I found myself feeling guilty and fussing because I was not with my colleagues, testifying as I should be, and as I had done several years before in two previous successful tax appeals. Fern Long kept me posted as the hearings progressed during those two days. The record shows that the staff presented an inspired portrayal of the role played by the Cleveland Public Library, not only within the Cleveland city limits but also in the county, state and in the nation. According to the record, the Cleveland Library was also honored when two nationally known Library figures testified on behalf of the Library. Emerson Greenaway, retired Director of the Philadelphia Free Library, and Harry Peterson, Director of the Washington, D.C. Public Library took the witness stand and made a remarkable presentation of the Cleveland

Public Library's position in the nation as a great urban Library and the need to maintain it as a viable resource. I understood that they, the staff, and the Library's attorneys did their best to win the case.

Even after all these years, on those occasions when my mind takes me back to those days in November and December of 1969, a feeling of deep sadness comes over me. I cannot help feeling that I was robbed of an important period of my career. In addition to Edna's death at the age of fifty-two just before Thanksgiving, my being stricken with a heart attack shortly thereafter was the crowning blow because it not only placed me on the side lines at work at a vital time, but also succeeded in spoiling the family's Christmas and the beginning of the New Year. It would not have been so traumatic if it had all ended with those two heartbreaking events. It did not!

On Friday, January 9, 1970, my doctors gave me permission to return to work part-time. They cautioned me not to overdo it in anyway. They indicated that they wanted to see me in ten days to see how I was faring. I returned to work on Monday, January 12. Try as I could to restrain myself I found myself unable to stick to a half-day schedule as the doctors had ordered. I soon found myself working a full day and once again taking a full brief case of paper work to do at home in the evening. By the time I had been back at work a week, I began having the beginnings of the symptoms I had had before. This time I recognized these as a warning and called the doctor's office immediately. On January 19, I was back on the sick list again! This time my doctors reinforced by my two doctor brothers advised me that I must stop working. They were brutally frank, they said, "If you don't give it up now, you'll be digging your own gravel"

To me just the thought of giving up my work at the Library was anathema! The Cleveland Public Library had been my life since that day in 1927 when Miss Dorothy Tobin had hired me as her page at the Brownell Junior High School Library. I kept asking myself, how can I stop working now? I am only 57 years old! Ed our oldest son is about to enter the Dental School at Ohio State University, and young Paul also is scheduled to go on to Valparaiso University at summer's end. I told my brothers, Doctor Art and Doctor Nick, that I just could not give up my work. They told me that I did not have a choice, that if I wanted to make a complete recovery, I had to! They told me that I had been burning the candle at both ends for too many years, that my body could not take it any more. When Grace added her voice to theirs, and urged me to take their advice, I asked, "how will we manage financially?" She responded, "we'll have to use our savings, and I will go back to work until you have made a complete recovery." With that I capitulated, and thought of father who was forced out of work by the Depression in the 1930's and wondered how he would have advised me as I was being forced out of work at almost a similar age.

However, on January 20, 1970, although I was feeling weak and unwell, and against my doctors' advice, I decided to drive from my home in the West Park area of the city of Cleveland to President Heard's office at the Quincy Savings and Loan Company to tell him of my decision to end my career at the Cleveland Public Library. He was not only surprised to see me but also flabbergasted and said so, however, he understood and graciously accepted the news.

Also, knowing that my doctors, my brothers and my wife would not approve, I advised Mr. Heard that I was planning to work until the end of the business day on January 31, 1970 in order to complete paper work on projects in progress and in order to leave my office in proper order for a successor. I also advised him that since



I had enough accumulated vacation time that was legally due me, my effective date of resignation would then be March 18, 1970, that I would submit my letter of resignation for the record a few days before the end of January. I asked if this was alright with him. He graciously agreed.

It was around noon when I left Mr. Heard's office on January 20. Instead of going home, I went downtown to my office in the Main Library Building. I recall how surprised Mrs. Addis and the rest of the staff were to see me arrive so unexpectedly. I also recall calling Grace to tell her what I had arranged with Mr. Heard, that I was at work, etc. She was not happy, however, knowing me, spoke her piece and let it go at that. She concluded by saying, "don't stay too late!"

Being a meticulous and organized person, I wanted to leave my office in the kind of shape and order that would make it easy for whoever succeeded me to pick up where I had left off. I had done that throughout my career in the Library each time I left the various offices I had held over the years. So until January 31, I devoted myself to that task. I accomplished that work over those last days with a heart that was heavy and broken.

I submitted my letter of resignation to Mr. Heard on the morning of January 28, 1970. He telephoned the other Board members, immediately scheduling a special meeting of the Library Board. It was held on the next day, Thursday January 29 at 11:40 A.M. It was to be my last Board meeting. In addition to President Heard, the following Board members were present: Robert Merritt, Murray Davidson, George Livingston, and Gloria Battisti, who had been recently appointed to the Board. John Gardner was absent. Since the meeting had been called without the usual required notice by letter. Mr. Heard opened the meeting by stating that he had in his hand the required signed Waivers of Notice from the five Library Board Members present, dated and signed that morning. He then said he had the painful responsibility of presenting a letter of resignation dated January 28, 1970. He then read my letter.

Mr. Davidson made the following statement: "This comes as quite a shock to all of us. The responsibility a man feels to himself is one of the most critical that he must face—one I most recently faced. It is unthinkable that we have to face the loss of the distinguished services of the Director and regret that his health has been so seriously impaired that he has to make this decision. The Board could not presume on his personal decision and while saying that he will be missed, we salute his decision. Certainly family and health come first. We wish him the very best of health and good luck."

I had expected the kind of remarks that had been voiced by Mr. Davidson because I had been told that he also had been faced with the need to make a similar decision earlier. I had also thought that like remarks would be made by one or another of the Board members, and then my resignation would be formally accepted and that it would all be over with. However, that is not what happened. I did not expect and was totally surprised by what followed.

When Mr. Davidson had completed his statement, Mr. Livingston then spoke as follows:

Mr. D'Alessandro's resignation certainly came as a shock and as a surprise to me. However, he expressed himself in his letter in a manner which should be commended and did not get involved in

anything

other than his personal reason. have come to respect Mr. D'Alessandro very much after having got to know

him and to know how dedicated he is to the Library and how diligently he has worked as a Director who

has tried to hold us together and to move this Library forward, always working toward preventing divisiveness among us.

I have been aware of some of the problems that Mr. D'Alessandro has faced during his seven month period as Acting Director and during his eleven months as Director of this Library. respected the fact that Mr. D'Alessandro had accepted the position knowing that he was accepting a most difficult one. He accepted the assignment under some pressure from members of this Board. At the time that he was appointed innuendoes from people in the news media were untrue. There had been rumors indicating collusion between the black members of the Board and the Director as to the appointment of the Director. He never wanted to be the Director, but was asked to take the job by members of this Board because of the problems they were having in finding a man who could give this Library the direction it needed.

Mr. D'Alessandro could speak out and say that the Board did not support him and even in becoming

Director he was aware of this. feel that we are losing a fine librarian with the fine qualifications not held

by many. was one of those responsible for selecting a Director, and at the time when we were searching,

Mr. D'Alessandro stood tall among the people interviewed.

With these facts in mind, move that this Library Board commend Mr. D'Alessandro for forty years of

unselfish and dedicated service to the Cleveland Public Library system and that we accept his resignation with reluctance.

Mr. Davidson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Heard then said, "The Director has heard the expressions of two Board members. I would find it impossible in an adequate way to thank you, Mr. D'Alessandro, for giving me the pleasure of having been associated with you. I don't believe that anyone else has risen from page boy through the system to Director. This is truly an 'Horatio Alger' story. We are going to have a difficult time finding a Director of your sterling qualities and experience and who will be able to carry on with the achievements that you have so ably started. I personally will miss you and I want to shake the hand of a man."

I had experienced other meetings over the years that had left me drained emotionally. This one topped them all! If by some magic I could have vanished from that Board Room on that morning, I would have done so. The Lord must have given me strength. I was able to maintain my composure throughout the meeting and for the aftermath when I was surrounded by members of the media and then by members of the staff who were present, all of whom had been taken by surprise totally by my announced leaving. It was around two o'clock in the afternoon, when I was finally able to walk across the street to The Old Arcade to George Jacob's restaurant that was located across the way from Gollamer's Cigar Stand, where I was able to relax and regain my composure as I had a late lunch.

The rest of the day as I expected was spent receiving a parade of staff members who having heard the news, came to my office to wish me well. I am not ashamed to say that I shared a few tears with many of them who had been my co-workers and friends for four decades.

On January 30, 1970, President Heard created a surprise of his own by submitting his resignation from the Library Board effective immediately! This was another bombshell for the city and the library community. It came as a complete surprise to the Library and School Boards, and to me and the Library staff!

I soon learned that although Mr. Heard was bringing to an end his civic service on the Library Board, however he was at the same time assuming a new civic duty with the Civil Service Commission.

His letter, brief, cryptic in style, simply read as follows:

*January 30, 1970*

*Gentlemen:*

*Please accept my resignation from the Cleveland Public Library Board effective upon your receipt of this letter.*

*It has been my pleasure to serve with the many fine citizens of the community who share a sensitive interest in the library system.*

*Sincerely,  
/s/ Arthur B. Heard*

Mr. Heard's resignation coming so quickly, on the heels of my resignation, happening as it did in the waning days of the Library's centennial year gave me pause for thought. I was struck with the realization that the 100' anniversary year along with its excitement and many happy events had brought other events that were to have a serious and long term impact on the city's library. During the year, we had lost the gentlemanly leadership of President Lockwood Thompson who had been a dependable and solid member the Library Board for so many years when the School Board chose not to reappoint him. We "had also lost considerate, gentle, thoughtful Mrs. Florence Graham, first through her long illness and then her untimely death. Long term Board member Stanley Klonowski's resignation followed, leaving the Library Board minus a questioning conscience. These were not only sad but very serious losses. Dedicated old time staff members who lived through that period of the Library's history realized that as the centennial year was coming to a close, they had witnessed a traumatic time in the history of their beloved library.

January 30 and 31 being my last two days at work were long days for me. They had to be because I had to finish what I had set out to do, that is, to leave a well organized office. I had to clear my personal effects from my desk, personal books and family pictures that had graced the top and shelves of the bookcase behind my desk, etc. While so engaged as my last day was coming to an end, Mrs. Addis my secretary and other members of my official staff came in to bid me farewell. Again there were tears. By 6:00 P.M. all were gone.

I packed my belongings in a couple of cartons, carried them down to the car, making two trips to my parking space at the back of the Main Library Building. As I did that, the full effect of what was happening finally hit me. It was all really coming to an end! I went back to the office because there was one final official act of memo writing that had to be done. There were some last minute thoughts about pending business and ongoing projects that I felt that I must convey to my lieutenants. I wrote pen and ink memos to Acting Deputy Director Fern Long, Clerk-Treasurer Dorothy Fechter, Chief Engineer Val Sopko, and Superintendent of Buildings Kenneth Eynon about items in their areas of responsibility. I recall finishing the memos, sealing them in envelopes, addressing them to each of my long-time co-workers, dropping them on Mrs. Addis' desk for delivery the next day.

It was 8:30 P.M. when I finally turned out the lights and left the office for the last time on that sad cold night of January 31, 1970. Except for the better part of three years in military service during World War II, the Cleveland Public Library had filled my life for forty years. I drove home that night feeling empty and depressed.

I was now homebound knowing that I had to regain my health. The doctors had ordered me to make a complete change in life style. I had been placed on a strict heart diet, I had been instructed to start aerobic walking for exercise, to lose weight, etc., etc. That was to be my life for the next several months!

Through that entire period, through the ordeal of my heart attack, hospitalization, aborted comeback to my job, and through the eventual trauma of leaving the Cleveland Public Library, Grace and my sons were my support and salvation. I know I would not have survived without the unflagging care, love and understanding they provided day after day. I know I was hard to live with for quite some time before I finally came around to accepting what had happened to me. With God's help, I was able to come to grips with the fact that I was not going to be able to be the family bread winner for a while, that my job for the time being, was to work at getting well and strong again.

Early during this period of recuperation and physical rebuilding, my friends at the Library had contacted me to tell me that they wanted to arrange for a special reception in my honor since they had not been able to do it before I left. This pleased me very much, however, I explained that I was not up to it physically, and that I preferred just to continue having their good wishes and prayers. They did not let it go at that. One day during the spring of the year, Adeline Corrigan who was Assistant Librarian for Children's Services and Fern Long, then Acting Director came to visit me at my home in West Park. I recall that it was an unusual beautiful, sunny day for that time of the year. Grace and I were enjoying the sunshine in the back yard when they arrived. We had lemonade and cookies and chatted for about an hour. Before they left, Fern took a large and a small envelope from her purse, and first handed me the small envelope with a greeting card which contained a money gift of four hundred dollars given by the staff. Miss Corrigan explained that the staff had done this as a spontaneous act because they felt bad because they had not been able to give me a party. Well, both Grace and I were speechless for a moment and accepted the gift in the spirit with which it had been offered. That is an act that not only touched me deeply then but has continued to do so whenever I have thought about it over the years. Fern then gave me the large envelope, from which I drew an 8 X 10 document. Reading it, it was impossible to keep the tears from flowing. She told me that it had been presented in a special meeting of The Library Board held on February 2, 1970, that it expressed the sincere feelings of the Library Board of Trustees and of the entire staff of the Cleveland Public Library, that the Board had passed it unanimously.

This document had been filed away in my files containing my career memorabilia. It surfaced when I retrieved the files to start writing this book two and a half years ago. I had forgotten that the document existed! I include it here because it is a document that I treasure and should be a part of this memoir.

#### BOARD RESOLLITION

WHEREAS Edward A. D'Alessandro joined the staff of the Cleveland Public Library as a page 41 years ago; and

WHEREAS he exhibited great intellectual vigor and diligence while so employed to qualify himself as a

professional librarian by earning bachelors and masters degrees at John Carroll University and Western

Reserve University School of Library Science; and

WHEREAS he subsequently served the Library with great distinction in many positions of responsibility,

among them Librarian of the Euclid 100th Branch, Assistant Head of the Main Library, Business Manager,

and Director of the Library; and

WHEREAS during his Directorship he was unfortunately stricken with such grievous ill health that, moved

by sterling qualities of loyalty, dedicated service, and devotion to duty, he felt it necessary to resign as Director, and the Board, with great regret, has accepted said resignation:

It All Caught up with Me

BE IT NOW RESOLVED that this Board express its deep gratitude to Edward A. D'Alessandro for a life-time of able professional service to the Cleveland Public Library; for the resolution and vigor he brought to

innumerable tasks, the performance of which reflected great credit upon the Library; and for the exemplary

professional advancement and leadership he consistently exhibited over the years of a distinguished

career; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Board cause a citation to be engrossed and executed commemorating Director D'Alessandro's distinguished professional career at the Cleveland Public Library and order that it be displayed in a location of his choice.

The delivery of that document on that day in the spring of 1970 made my day. After Adeline and Fern left, I turned to Grace, with a big grin on my face, and said, "This resolution, is a helluva lot better than the usual pocket watch given to a retiree!" Grace's face lit up with a big smile and she said, "The old you is back, this is the first humorous thing you have said since your heart attack. You are going to make it!"



## Chapter 27. Recovery, New Life and a Second Career

Make it, I did! With Grace's help, the special diet meals she prepared for me, and her willingness to accompany me on my aerobic walks did the trick. I lost forty-one pounds! I had shed all the weight I had gained as a result of the sedentary life I had led for years. I was back to what I had weighed when I returned from military service after World War II-135 pounds. Grace as well as I were in better physical shape than we had been in years.

Some time around the middle of March, I was saddened to hear that a decision in the Cleveland Public Library's appeal to the Board of Tax Appeals with respect to its 1970 Budget allocation had been received. The Board of Tax Appeals had seen fit to reduce the Library's original budget allocation of \$7,681,927 which had been awarded by the Cuyahoga County Budget Commission in response to my last budget request to \$ 7,468,340, a reduction of \$213,587! This was a substantial reduction that was going to have a serious impact on the Library's operations in 1970. The Cuyahoga County Library's allocation was increased from its original allocation of \$3,817,906 to \$4,450,495, an increase of \$632,589. My worst fears had come to pass.

The record shows that when Mr. Merritt as President of the Board reported the bad news to the Board, he said that the actual need of the Library for 1970 was \$ 9,511,4 70, that it was the recommendation of the attorneys, acting as counsel for the Board of Trustees that the matter be taken to the Supreme Court of Ohio. The record also shows that before the end of March, the Cleveland Public Library Board of Trustees decided to carry its appeal to the Supreme Court of Ohio. Although I was no longer a part of the Cleveland Public Library family, the news of the Library's failed appeal before the Board of Tax Appeals, and understanding the implications of what faced the Library and its staff in the days ahead, I nevertheless felt worried and sad on their behalf.

By early April 1 of 1970, having religiously followed my doctors' orders and with my family's help, I had recovered from my illness. Sometime during the morning of that day, I heard a voice from the past. When the telephone rang that morning, Grace called to me saying, "O.tfincy is on the phone for you!" I picked up the phone and surprise of surprises, it was L. Quincy Mumford, the Librarian of Congress, my former boss at the Cleveland Public Library. I had not seen or talked to Quincy since he left Cleveland in 1954 to become the Librarian of Congress. I was puzzled as to why he would be calling me after all these years.

I heard, Quincy say in his unforgettable North Carolian accent, "Eddie, are you ready to come back to work for me? I have been reading about your retirement from the Cleveland Public Library in our professional library publications, that you have been recuperating from a heart attack. Are you at the point now where you might be

ready come to join me here on Capitol Hill?" I did not know what to say for a moment or two. I was completely taken by surprise. I finally was able to reply saying that I was glad to hear from him, that I was so surprised and pleased that he still wanted me to join him after so many years since we had last talked about such a possibility. I told him that while I felt that I was fully recovered that the suddenness of his offer required some thought on my part and of course discussion with my doctors, Grace and sons. He replied saying, "Eddie, let me know in a couple of day's!" I agreed and thanked him. We said our good byes, and that was it!

Grace who had been listening to my end of the conversation, was as amazed as I was at this turn of events. She immediately said, "If you feel up to it, it may be the right thing for us to do at this time. After all, Edward will be going to Dental School, and Paul will be going away to college. This may be the right time to make such a move."

Since Dr. John Sanitato the internist who was monitoring me at the time, had given me a clean bill of health, on the morning of the 4th of April 1970, I decided to accept Mr. Mumford's offer and telephoned him. Again I was amazed on how quickly he responded to my acceptance. He asked me if it would be possible for me to come to Washington sometime within the next ten days, that he would like me to meet with some of his department heads to talk about possible areas in the Library of Congress where my background and library experience would be of most help. I was

flabbergasted on how quickly things were developing. He must have sensed my feeling of surprise because he quickly said, "If that is too short notice, Eddie, tell me." I found myself saying, "OH, NO!" He then said, "That's fine, I'll have the Travel Office here arrange for a government travel voucher for transportation on one of the airlines to get you here for a day soon. I'll get it to you as soon as possible. Is that alright?" Of course, I said, "O.K." In what seemed to be the twinkling of an eye, I was committed to going to Washington for an interview with The Librarian of Congress and his top officers to see where I might best fit in the table of organization of the nations great library. If all went well, it meant that, I would be uprooting my family from extended family and friends, selling our home and moving lock stock and barrel to a new community. When I expressed those feelings to Grace, she and I began to have second thoughts about the idea of going, however, we both laughed when I said, 'kfter all I am just going for an interview, I might not be hired!"

Mr. Mumford was true to his word. On April 14, he sent me a travel voucher covering all travel expenses to and from Washington, D.C. along with his letter inviting me to come on April 20, to spend the day with him and various department heads of the Library of Congress. I was now getting excited about the prospects and began to imagine what it was going to be like working at the Library of Congress, seeing Mr. Mumford again after sixteen years and meeting top level representatives of his management team. I spent the next six days getting myself mentally and psychologically ready for my day on Capitol Hill.

On April 20, as arranged by the government travel voucher, I flew to the nation's capital on the United Airlines 8:15 A.M. Flight, arriving there at 9:15 A.M. and luckily shortly after the end of a heavy wind and rain storm. The sun was just beginning to peak through the remaining clouds as the plane landed. Since my travel voucher also provided for cab fare, I took a cab from Washington National Airport to the Library of Congress.

The cab brought me on to Capitol Hill just as its monuments and imposing Capitol and other government buildings, freshly washed by the rain, now gleamed and glistened in the morning sun, like architectural jewels.



Once again I felt that thrill and pride that I had felt during World War II, when as a young soldier I first saw my country's Capitol and its neighboring buildings on a day's delay enroute to a new assignment at Drew Field, a LI.5. Army Air Corps Base, located near Tampa Florida.

The cabby dropped me off at the Main entrance of what is now known as the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. There immediately in front of me at sidewalk level was that unforgettable fountain known as the Court of Neptune. I took a moment to look at that ageless introductory architectural feature, remembering the day that my Grace and I had stood on that very spot admiring the beauty of the fountain in November of 1947, on our visit to the library as a couple during our honeymoon in the capital city.

I decided to walk up the great stone stairway to the first floor entrance instead of entering the building under the less impressive arches at the ground level because I wanted to see the ethnological heads over the first story pavilion windows and the sculptured busts at the portico above the main entrance, because they had impressed me so much each time I had seen them in the years past. It is worth the extra energy it takes to climb that great stairway to that main entrance, especially so, when one is greeted by those two pieces of architectural de resistance, the bronze doors. What a breath-taking entrance!

Before I reached the top of that stairway on that 20th day of April of 1970, I found a fairly large partially broken glass light globe on a step near the top. It apparently had been blown off of a nearby ornamental metal post during the rain and windstorm that had preceded my arrival. It miraculously had not shattered on impact in its fall to the stone step. Except for a small chip it appeared to be intact. Without hesitation I picked up the globe and carried it into the building. It was an automatic action on my part, probably due to the awareness of things having to do with the care and maintenance of library buildings that had become second nature when I was the Business Manager of the Cleveland Public Library.

Upon entering the Great Hall of the Library of Congress, I found a Library police officer at a desk immediately inside the doorway. I placed the globe on his desk and advised him that he might want to turn it over to the Library's Superintendent of Buildings and arrange for the installation of a new globe. As an afterthought, I introduced myself and asked for directions to Mr. Mumford's office, I have never forgotten the look on that man's face in the years since. In the later years of my association with him and other Library police officers the story of the strange man who came into the Library of Congress on a day following a heavy wind and rain storm, and nonchalantly deposited a broken outdoor glass light globe on the officer's desk with instructions about what to do about it, became a part of Library of Congress Police Folklore. Over the years we had many a laugh as the story was told and retold, getting more hilarious each time it was told because it took the office of the Architect of the Capitol almost a year to replace the broken globe!

As I left the police officer's desk, I took a minute or two to drink in the breathtaking beauty of the awesome art and architecture of the Great Hall before proceeding to Mr. Mumford's office which was just off the Great Hall. In my estimation there is no other place in the nation's capital or any where in this country that can match it. I arrived in The Librarian's outer office at 10:00 A.M. There I met for the first time Gladys Field a charming and gracious Assistant to the Librarian, who ushered me into Mr. Mumford's office.

Mr. Mumford greeted me warmly, placing his arm around me, he guided me to a chair along side his desk. He

asked about my flight, had we missed the storm on the way, etc. He asked about my wife and sons and their situations in school etc. I, in turn asked about his wife and daughter. After we had completed our talk of personal matters, Mr. Mumford told me that he had arranged appointments with Mr. John Lorenz, the Deputy Librarian of Congress, Mr. William Welsh, the Director of the Processing Department, Mr. Fraser Poole, Director of the Preservation Office and who had been placed in charge of planning of the newest library building which was to be built on a large plot of land immediately across the street from the Main Building on Independence Avenue. The land had been cleared and was temporarily being used for Library parking.

My last appointment was to be with Mr. Paul Berry, who was then the Director of the Reference Department. Mr. Mumford said that he had arranged for each of the men to come in at various intervals during the morning to discuss their operations and to give them and me the opportunity to decide where my background and experience would be most productive for each of them and most satisfying for me.

John Lorenz, the Deputy Librarian was the first to join Mr. Mumford and me that morning. He was a fairly tall, rather soft spoken, gentle man who seemed glad to see me and welcomed me' with a firm hand shake. He spoke of his responsibilities and work as Mr. Mumford's deputy and how his office shared in the overall administration of the Library. He asked about my career and experience in the Cleveland Public Library. He seemed to be especially interested in how public library administration differed from that of a federal library and about public library financing and budgeting. Mr. Mumford advised him that I had administered several branch libraries in Cleveland. After

about a half an hour Mr. Lorenz excused himself to attend another meeting.

Fraser Poole, the Director of Preservation and Building Planning was the next to join us. He also was friendly, not quite as tall but bigger in girth and more talkative than Mr. Lorenz. He talked about his work and responsibilities in the preservation of library materials and about his work in the planning of what was to be the third library building on Capitol Hill. He was particularly interested in the experience I had gained while I was Chief of the Binding and Book Repair Division and the work I had done in building planning while I had been Business Manager in the Cleveland Library. Mr. Mumford told Mr. Poole that he had appointed me as Chief of Binding and Book Repair Division in Cleveland and could vouch for my experience in that area. Also after about a half an hour, Mr. Poole excused himself pleading another appointment.

Mr. William (Bill) Welsh was the third director that I met that morning. He at the time was the Director of the Processing Department. He was fairly well built, breezy and flamboyant. He described the various divisions of the Processing Department, book ordering, cataloging, etc., etc. I was frank and told him that my experience in those areas was limited, that the book ordering experience I had had was the book ordering I had done in the several branch Libraries I had administered and the book ordering and cataloging I had done in a L.I.S. Army library before I transferred into the infantry during World War Two. I told him that if I were to be given a choice my preference at that moment would be to work in either the reference or buildings/preservation areas. He thanked me for my candor and honesty, wished me luck and excused himself.

My last interview was with Mr. Paul Berry, the Director of the Reference Department. He was a tall, handsome and well dressed man. He greeted me with a warm smile and friendly handshake. He seemed to be genuinely

glad to see me and made me feel at home. I immediately felt that he was a kindred spirit. I knew instantly that this was a man that I could work with. He spoke of the administrative functions of the Reference Department Office, which did not seem too different from the work I had done when I was the Assistant Head of the Main Library which administered the divisions of the Main Library in Cleveland. He described the work of the various divisions of the Reference Department and the challenges they provided in serving their respective clienteles with the kind of enthusiasm and dedication that I had been used to in the Cleveland Public Library. He was genuinely interested in the reference work I had done in the branches and in the Main Library in Cleveland. Around 12:30 P.M. Mr. Mumford said, "Let's break for lunch. Let me see if John Lorenz can join us." It turned out that Mr. Lorenz could. On that day I was treated to a most pleasant lunch at the Monocle, one of Capitol Hill's well known restaurants, a short distance down First Street, near the Union Station, a place that I later learned was frequented by Congressmen and Senators and other people of note.

The lunch at the Monocle on that day enabled me to become better acquainted with Mr. Berry and Mr. Lorenz and they with me. In fact it was then I decided that if I was going to work at the Library of Congress that the Reference Department would be the place for me, that Mr. Berry was the one that I would like to work with and voiced that preference when Mr. Mumford asked what my thoughts were on the subject. Mr. Berry said that he thought that he could use my support in the Reference Department, as a special assistant, that it would take a little while to develop a job description. He continued that he had felt for some time that the Reference Department could use a program manager or some kind of planning assistant. He asked if that was something that might interest me. I replied that it would. Our luncheon meeting ended on that most satisfying note.

As we walked back to the Library, Mr. Berry asked about my flight schedule back to Cleveland. I said that I had planned to be at Washington National Airport by at least 5:45 P.M. to make my 6:45 P.M. flight back. He then suggested that I return to the Reference Department with him to talk some more about the kind of position that he had in mind. I agreed with alacrity. This seemed to please both Mr. Mumford and Mr. Lorenz. When we got back to Mr. Mumford's office door, we shook hands. I thanked Mr. Mumford and John Lorenz for having received me so kindly and so warmly and for a wonderful lunch. In parting, Mr. Mumford speaking to Mr. Berry and me, said, "keep me posted on developments," shook hands with me as he and Mr. Lorenz went to their adjoining offices.

Mr. Berry then escorted me to his office in the Reference Department. It was not too far from the suite of offices occupied by The Librarian of Congress and The Deputy Librarian of Congress, which in later years I got to know as Mahogany Row, so known because of the fine woodwork in those offices. They were also located in what was architecturally known in the Library of Congress as a Curtain. Mr. Berry's office was located in what was known also architecturally as a Pavilion, which was located at the far end of the Librarian's Corridor.

As we walked down that corridor on that afternoon, I kept saying to myself, "Is it possible that I am about to have the opportunity to come to work in a place so full of beauty?" I could not keep my eyes from the beautiful artwork that decorated the ceiling of that corridor, which I could see was an extension of the beauty found in the Great Hall.

Mr. Berry and I spent two productive hours in his office in the Pavilion getting better acquainted. Those couple of hours enabled him to tell me about the history of the Reference Department, about his career in the library, that in

many ways paralleled mine. He sketched out the functions of the various divisions of the department, his thoughts about changes that might be made in them and in the operations of the department as a whole, and finally how I might fit in to the scheme of things.

When it came time for me to leave, I was now certain that Mr. Berry and I were kindred spirits, and that my association with him professionally would be a good one. When we parted on that afternoon of April 20, 1970, Mr. Berry said he would be in touch before too long. I thanked him for his hospitality and kindness, saying that I looked forward to hearing from him.

It was 5:30 P.M. when I left the Library of Congress on that day and was lucky enough to catch a cab at the corner of First and Independence Avenue. Traffic by that time was quite heavy because a good many government workers were on their way home. For a few moments I was apprehensive as to whether I'd get to the airport on time. I had no reason to worry because the cabby was able to get me to the airport by 6:00 P.M. My flight home was uneventful and on time. It had been a full, productive and satisfying day.

I was now faced with the reality of having to tell Grace and the boys that I was committed to taking a job at the Library of Congress, that all of us had to get used to the idea that we were going to have to move to another city, that we were going to have to decide where we would like to live in the Washington, D.C. area, sell our Cleveland home, select and make arrangements with an out-of-state mover, etc., etc. in a relatively short period of time. These and many other related thoughts were running through my mind when I returned home on the evening of April 20, 1970.

I recall it was close to 9:00 P.M. when I walked in on my family that evening. Grace had fed the boys dinner at the usual time and was keeping dinner warm for herself and me as she had done on many other occasions when I was unable to make it home on time. They were anxiously waiting to hear about my day in the nation's Capital and at the Library of Congress.

They listened to my review of my interviews with Mr. Mumford and his department heads at the Library with great interest and they reacted with excitement at my description of the beauty of the Library of Congress and the other buildings on Capitol Hill, etc. However, when I told them that I had committed myself to taking a job in the Reference Department at the Library, they were genuinely happy and excited for me, yet I could not help getting the feeling that making the move was not going to be easy for them. Nevertheless they congratulated me and did all they could to make

me feel that they were all for making the move. From the very beginning Grace became the "gung-ho" one and in reality took the leadership in planning the logistics for the move and immediately set in motion plans to get the house ready for sale, etc.

Well before the end of May of 1970, Mr. Berry sent me a job description for the kind of position he had described during our meeting in April along with the grade and salary that position offered, and a form for me to sign if the position as described and the salary was acceptable. At the same time I was asked to indicate the date that I could report for work. I lost no time in approving and signing the offer and advised Mr. Berry that I felt that we ought to be able to sell our home and complete all necessary work and business necessary to make our move to

the Washington area

by July 6 and to enable me to start work at the Library of Congress on July 13.

From that time on things moved very quickly. On the 24th of May, I received letters from Mr. Berry and Mr. Mumford both dated May 21, 1970 telling me how pleased they were that I would be joining them early in July. Mr. Berry also advised me that he was making arrangements for me to come to the Library for two days in June for consultation and orientation prior to reporting finally on July 13.

On May 28, Mr. Berry wrote to tell me that it had been approved for me to come to the Library for the two days of consultation on June 2-3, asking me to arrive on Tuesday June 2 between the hours of 8:00 and 8:30 A.M.

From the time that I had returned from my initial visit to the Library of Congress on the 20th of April, Grace and the boys and I had been working almost night and day getting the house ready for sale, painting the house inside and out, getting rid of everything that we did not intend to move and taking care of the countless other chores, business and financial items that must be done in connection with a move out of state. What remained to be done was to find a place to live in the Washington area before July 6 which we had established as our move date in our contract with

Allied Movers, Inc. We had signed a realty contract to place our home on sale as of June 1.

I had decided to drive and take Grace with me to Washington on June 1st. The plan was to leave early on that day so that Grace and I could start looking for an apartment in the Washington area, that if we were not successful on that first day, then while I was occupied with Mr. Berry at the Library on June 2 and 3rd, Grace would continue looking for a place to live somewhere around Capitol Hill, near the Library if possible. Ed and Paul were to remain at home and serve as our representatives with the realtor on those first three days in the showing of our home to any prospective buyers who might come during that time.

We did manage to leave for Washington, D.C. early on the morning of June 1 and arrived there in good time so that we were able to spend several hours before nightfall searching for an apartment on Capitol Hill and neighborhoods not too far from the Hill. We had hoped that we would be able to find something decent and in a price range that would fit our budget. We were disappointed. At supper time we gave up for the day and went to our hotel. We felt that it would be wise for us to get cleaned up, have something to eat and then spend the evening resting for the next two days that I was to spend at the Library and Grace who was then going to be on her own continuing the search for a place to live.

As I expected, June 2nd and June 3rd were full days for me at the Library of Congress with Mr. Berry. My orientation in the work of the Reference Department was thorough and Mr. Berry made sure that I not only met the members of his immediate staff but also got around to meet as many of the Chiefs and or Assistant Chiefs of the various divisions of the department. They were two very productive days for me. Grace, however, spent two very frustrating days in the search for an apartment. Each day at 5:30 P.M. when I finished my sessions at the Library she would meet me there

tired, dispirited and disgusted because she had not been successful in her search. Each night we'd go back to our hotel room to relax for a while. Then after a refreshing shower, we'd dress for dinner, find a nice place to eat and enjoy the rest of the evening.

We did not despair at not having found a place on Capitol Hill because we had planned to stay in the Washington Metropolitan area until the evening of June 4, the idea being that we would spend that full free day investigating apartments in Maryland and Virginia. However, it was imperative that we find and rent an apartment before we left for home on June 4. That was a must because we had to be back home that evening to be ready for Paul's high school graduation on June 5! Many times in the years that followed, I have thought on how naive we must have been at the time in allowing such a short time to accomplish such an important and major item of business.

We checked out of our hotel room in Washington, D.C. in early morning of June 4 and drove first into Maryland because Grace and I thought it would be nice to try to find a place in Silver Spring near the church where a friend of ours was the Senior Pastor. As luck would have it, even though we had spent the major portion of the day in that area, we had been unsuccessful in our search. By 5:00 P.M. we were frantic. We had hoped that we would have accomplished our mission in time to leave for home before dark. In desperation we got on the Beltway and sped into Virginia. Using a rental guidebook we had been given at the hotel, we decided to get off onto Little River Turnpike (Route 236). The first apartment complex we found was located not far from the Beltway exit, in Annandale. It was miserable, not worth the rent being asked. I was about ready to give up and start for home, thinking we'd have to come back in a few days to continue our search, when Grace said, "let's try one more place before we go."

That place was an apartment complex known as Fairfax Square in Fairfax City, that fronted on Little River Turnpike located at the 9900 block. We arrived at the rental office just before closing time and were lucky enough to find the apartment manager there who was willing to stay overtime to discuss our most urgent need. When we sheepishly told her that we hoped that a suitable apartment might be available for us to move into sometime after July 4, too our surprise and amazement, she said that by chance there was a six room apartment located on the second floor of one of their two story garden type apartment buildings situated in one of their secluded wooded areas. She added that the apartment was currently occupied but that the present occupants would be vacating the premises around the end of June, that she would be glad to call the lady of the house to see if she would agree to let us see the apartment. The Lord was with us. The lady agreed to show us the place then and there!

The apartment manager drove us around to the back of the complex to a nice looking apartment building that bore 9930 Fairfax Square as its address, and took us up to apartment 19 an end unit on the second floor. Its occupant welcomed us warmly and showed us through. After having seen such poor apartments that had been shown us in Washington, D.C. and in Maryland, we were agreeably surprised to find here at last six good size, attractive rooms and two baths, which we felt suited our needs at the time. It turned out that the occupant wanted to leave all the floor carpeting and all the curtains and drapes for a reasonable amount of money. The white carpeting was good Lees quality and almost new and the curtains and drapes were also of good quality, also fairly new and in good condition, all of which pleased Grace. We lost no time, and then and there purchased the furnishings from the tenant. After thanking her for her friendliness and hospitality, we returned to the rental office with the manager, signed the necessary rental papers and left the required fee to hold the apartment. We had been lucky at the very end of our last day of our quest. We had managed to secure a place to live that was decent and at an affordable monthly rent. Yes, we had a place, as the manager told us that would be cleaned and painted when we arrived on July 6.

We bid the apartment manager farewell and thanked her profusely for staying over so late, well past her office hours, to provide us with a place to live. She had been a life saver. It was 8:30 P.M. when we left her. Though tired and worn out, we were leaving Virginia in a happy frame of mind and hungry. We stopped for a half an hour at a fast food place on Little River Turnpike on the way to the Beltway and our route home. It was 9:30 P.M. when we were finally out of the metropolitan area and homeward bound, and not before 1:30 A.M. when we arrived at our home in Cleveland, Ohio on June 5, 1970. We had made it back as we had promised, in time for Paul's graduation on that afternoon!

June 5 that year was also a happy day because that was the day that our Cleveland home was sold, to a young couple who had come to see the house with their parents while we were gone. I had worried that we were not going to be able to sell the house before we were scheduled to move. Now that that worry was out of the way we could concentrate on the countless other tasks that had to be done before move time.

Also during this time Mr. Berry kept sending me reading materials about the Reference Department and its divisions along with many other documents pertaining to the rules and regulations of the Library of Congress to help me to prepare myself for a smooth entry into the work and service of the National Library'.

We moved from our modest ranch house at 4115 West 145th Street in Cleveland's West Park area on Monday morning, July 6, 1970. It was a home that Grace and I had watched being built from scratch in 1950. We had put so much of ourselves into it. We had done all the landscaping ourselves, planted the grass front and back, planted all the shrubbery, trees and flowers ourselves, and done all our interior decoration as well. In 1957 we had designed and contracted the building of a nice size family room with fireplace as a warm and comfortable addition at the back of the house, which had also enabled us to create a nice patio, reached by a side door in the addition. Grace and I had lived comfortably and happily and raised our two sons there over the past twenty years. Needless to say we drove out of the driveway of our home of twenty years with heavy hearts that morning in July 1970, as we began our journey to a new life in the southeast.

The weather that morning also did nothing to dispel the gloom that had enveloped us as we drove on to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, on our way to Virginia. The sky already filled with dark, ominous clouds began to sound off with thunder and lightning. By the time we reached the Somerset, Pennsylvania rest stop, the clouds opened all their stops and began to dump tons of water, making it almost impossible to see the road ahead. Without hesitation we welcomed the chance to get off the stormy road and sought the comfort of a rest stop until the weather eased.

After about a half an hour, we were able to take to the road again. As luck would have it, it was not too long before we ran into heavy rain again. From that point on, it was heavy rain all the way to Virginia. This made it necessary for us to make many more stops than we would have normally made. The downpour was so heavy at times that we had to get off the road for safety.





## Chapter 28. I Become a Virginian, a Beltway Commuter and Special Assistant in the Reference Department of the Library of Congress

AS a result our arrival in Fairfax City, Virginia on July 6, 19 70 was delayed. It was around 5:00 P.M. and still raining heavily when we drove off the beltway on to Little River Turnpike. Although we were only about three miles away from our apartment in Fairfax Square, we decided to stop for dinner at a fast food restaurant located at the intersection of Gallows Road and Little River Turnpike. Tired and hungry we made a dash from the car through the parking lot to the restaurant through the downpour. We were totally soaked as we entered and huddled in a booth. I know we were a sorry looking lot when we were approached by a very pleasant young man who turned out to be the manager and who asked how he might help us. I introduced myself and my family, telling him we were just moving into the area and where. He welcomed us warmly, and gave us menus to peruse. As a gesture of hospitality, he brought each of us a complimentary drink which he identified as an “Orange Slurpee,” which we enjoyed while we made our dinner choices.

Having eaten and rested, we left that eatery at about 6:30 P.M. and proceeded to our new home in Fairfax Square only a short distance down the pike. Since the apartment manager had sent us the keys the week before, we were able to go directly to our apartment, where we were able to unpack the clothing we had brought in suitcases, take showers and get into some clean dry clothes and relax for the evening. I recall that we slept on the floor that night because our beds and the rest of our furniture were not due to arrive until the following morning. I also recall that we did not get much sleep that night. It was not because the floor was too hard because the Lees carpeting and the padding underneath were good. I have since attributed our poor sleep that night to the fact that we were so keyed up as a result of having had to travel for almost a whole day through such a heavy rain storm.

We were all wide awake at dawn of the next day, July 7, partly because we had not slept well and partly because we were anxiously anticipating the arrival of the moving van which was scheduled to arrive some time during the morning. We need not have rushed to get ready for its arrival because it was afternoon before it arrived. The movers however, quickly unloaded and were gone within a couple of hours, leaving us surrounded with boxes to be unpacked.

As expected we spent the next several days getting our apartment organized according to a floor plan that we had

worked out before hand. I recall the we had planned;to be settled by the end of the week so that I would have the weekend to rest before reporting for work at the Library of Congress on Monday, July 13. With Ed's and Paul's help we managed to meet that objective.

Before I commuted for the first time from Fairfax City, Virginia to Capitol Hill, I had asked Mr. James Dove who was my neighbor in the apartment below us for directions to the Hill, which he graciously gave me. He did not, however, warn me about what I might expect in the way of traffic on the route he laid out for me. The morning of July 13 was my baptism under fire as a commuter during weekday morning rush hours on the Capital Beltway! The traffic jam-ups along the entire route were horrific and to a neophyte such as myself, they were a disturbing challenge. Fortunately, I had allowed my self more than enough time to get to the Library. I was able to report to work on time, even though it took me an hour and a half to make the trip.

My first day on the job in the Reference Department was most interesting and pleasant. Mr. Berry welcomed me warmly. After a briefing in his office he took me through the department office to greet the staff. He then took me to Mr. Mumford's office, where he greeted me with the warmth of the old friend and colleague that he was. After I had met Mr. Mumford's office staff, Mr. Berry took me back to the office that I was to occupy in the Reference Department. He had arranged for me to have an office adjacent to his in the Reference Department Pavilion. I was agreeably surprised that it was an office with windows. The view that I had from my office windows was priceless, one that I cherished and appreciated all through the years that I was privileged to occupy that office. The United States Capitol Building and the beauty of the Capitol grounds was there for me to enjoy and draw inspiration from every day.

Although Mr. Berry had arranged to have my office furnished with an executive size desk, placed with my back to the window and facing the door of my office so as to be able to see people as they entered, my typewriter on a credenza along the window side behind me, provided me with a perfect view of the capitol building every time I used the typewriter. He had also provided me with book cases for books and reference works that I would need, chairs and a couch for visitors. Although worn, the red carpeting that covered the floor of the office made it a warm and most comfortable office, for which I was indeed very grateful.

During the afternoon of my first day, I had another surprise. Mr. Berry had arranged for a reception for me in the Pavilion part of the office, at which time he had asked Reference Department Division Chiefs, Directors and Administrators of other departments of the Library to come to meet me. I was not only overwhelmed by the friendly welcome that I received from all, but also impressed with the array of scholarship and talent represented in all the people that I met that afternoon. I felt blessed to have been given the opportunity to become one of them. That was my introduction as an officer of the Reference Department of the Library of Congress on July 13, 1970.

During the next twenty-two and a half years I was privileged to serve as an officer of the Library of Congress with five Directors, and during the tenures of three Librarians of Congress. First, it was my pleasure to A Virginian, a Beltway Commuter and Special Assistant 301 serve in the nation's library during the term of the only Librarian of Congress in my time who was a professionally trained librarian, a person who had a degree in Library Science, and who had had many years of service as a successful top level administrator and as a Director in two of the largest

public libraries in the United States before he was selected to head the National Library in 1954. That person was Lawrence Quincy Mumford, who during his twenty years as Librarian of Congress is credited with having greatly expanded library services to the LI.5. Congress and the national library community. During his term of office his many accomplishments and administrative competence had won the confidence of the members of both houses of Congress, so much so as to have made possible for the Library's annual appropriations to have been increased from approximately nine million dollars to ninety-six million dollars. To Mr. Mumford also belongs the credit for convincing the Congress that a third library building was needed on Capitol Hill. The James Madison Memorial Building that now stands on Independence Avenue across the street from the Main Building now known as the Thomas Jefferson Building-is-a monument to his vision and good standing with the nation's legislators. To enumerate and report on Mr. Mumford's many other accomplishments during his term as Librarian of Congress would necessitate filling the pages of another book.

I was privileged to be a part of the Mumford administration as an officer of the Reference Department from July 13, 1970 until December 31, 1974 when Mr. Mumford retired after twenty years of distinguished service as the nation's top librarian. As an officer of the Reference Department during the Mumford years I was also privileged to share in a number of happy events. I believe it is in order to share my recollections of a few of those events with you. There was the opportunity afforded me to participate in the dedication and opening of the new recording studio located at the Taylor Street headquarters of the Division for the Blind and Physically handicapped shortly after joining the Library staff, and to do some recording of books for the blind on tapes as a volunteer reader on Saturday mornings during that period.

There was also the privilege of being asked by Mr. Mumford to join him and Mr. Berry on a visit to the White House on one occasion during the Nixon presidency to deliver the first copy of 'A Tour of the White House for the Blind' to Mrs. Nixon. I recall with great pleasure the kind and warm reception we experienced with Patricia Nixon! She was so genuine and so gracious. The foregoing are only a few of the many special events that I was able to share in the 1970's, during the Mumford years.

In addition to such satisfying and memorable events, I had to endure the greatest sorrow of my life during that period. On June 12, 1973, Grace, my one and only love, passed away after suffering a heart attack without any previous warning of any kind. I was in total shock and completely devastated. Ed and Paul flew in to Virginia to be with me within a few hours. Had I not had them to help me physically and spiritually I really don't know what I might have done. Also when they had to leave me to return to their respective schools, Ed to the Ohio State School of Dentistry and Paul to Valparaiso University, my job and coworkers at the Library of Congress and my pastor and church friends helped me to make it through the many dark and terrible days that I faced during the entire period of my bereavement. My work and the experiences that I was fortunate to be a part of in the national library were a godsend and played a great part in my survival at the time.

On the day that Mr. Mumford retired, as provided by Library of Congress regulation 211-1, Deputy Librarian John Lorenz became Acting Librarian of Congress. His term of service in that position was to be short lived because President Gerald R. Ford lost no time in nominating a new Librarian of Congress. On June 20, 1975 he nominated Daniel d. Boorstin, the senior historian at the Smithsonian Institution to be Librarian of Congress.

Dr. Boorstin's nomination like 'the nomination of poet Archibald MacLeish by President Franklin Roosevelt on June 7, 1939 brought opposition from the national library community. In each case the American Library Association took the position that the nation should have as its Librarian not only a scholar but one who is a professionally trained librarian, one who is an experienced library administrator. In Dr. Boorstin's case in addition to opposition from the professional librarians there was also opposition from the staff of the Library of Congress who also appeared at the Senate Hearings on his confirmation to voice that opposition. However, on September 26, 1975, the Senate confirmed the nomination of Daniel d. Boorstin to be Librarian of Congress, ignoring the testimony of the nation's librarians just as the Senate had done when it confirmed the nomination of Archibald MacLeish in 1939. Dr. Boorstin took the oath of office on November 12, 1975.

As an officer of the Library, I was privileged to be an invitee at the ceremony when Dr. Boorstin took the oath of office as the twelfth Librarian of Congress. It was an inspiring occasion held in the magnificent Great Hall. In attendance were President Gerald R. Ford and Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller. Representative Lucien N. Nedzi of Michigan, Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library presided. The oath was administered by the Speaker of the House of Representatives Carl Albert. I recall learning at the time that Dr. Boorstin took the oath on the Thomson Bible, one of the treasures from the collection of Thomas Jefferson housed in a specially secured, temperature controlled vault of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library.

During the first few months after his arrival Dr. Boorstin visited the various departments and divisions of the Library to meet the staffs and to become acquainted with the work and the organization and structure of the various departments of the Library. His visit to the Reference Department stands out in my mind because of the question that he asked me at the time. I recall sitting around the conference table in Mr. Berry's office with the new Librarian, Mr. Berry and the other officers of the department. During the course of the meeting, after Mr. Berry had given Dr. Boorstin a briefing on the work of the department and its organization, the Librarian made a point of asking each of us a question.

When he came to me, he asked how I felt about the Library's policy with regard to service to high school students. The policy was not to encourage high school students to use the Library. High school students were required to present a letter signed by the principal of their school certifying the student's specific need to use the resources of the Library of Congress. Otherwise the Library maintained that students should use their school or public libraries.

In response to his question, I told Dr. Boorstin that coming from a public library as I did he would have to take into consideration that I naturally would have a bias on the matter, that as a public librarian, I had long felt that while high school students should not have free access to the rare and special collections of the Library, that they should at least have access to the general collections because many of the school and public libraries available to students did not have collections with the depth and scope available in the much larger general collections of the Library of Congress. I continued saying that such students as the scholars of the future were being deprived of the resources of the nation's library. I concluded by asking him, "how would you have felt when you were a high school student and a budding scholar to have been barred from using the resources of this great library?" I was surprised by" his reply. He smiled and said, "for your information, I am still a budding scholar." In the days that followed, I often wondered whether he had considered my reply and question to him on that day impertinent. I

need not have worried because my relationship with Dr. Boorstin became one of professional, mutual respect and remained so until the day of his retirement almost twelve years later.

Five months after his appointment as Librarian of Congress he decided to reorganize some of the departments of the Library. The Reference Department was one of them. In April of 1976, the department was divided into two departments. Those divisions of the old department that had custody of the special collections were brought together to form what became known as the Research Department. Dr. Alan Fern, who had been the Chief of the Prints and Photographs Division one of the special collections was promoted, becoming the Director of the Research Department. This department included the Geography and Map Division, the Latin American, Portuguese, and Spanish Division, the Manuscript Division, the Music Division, The Orientalia Division, the Prints and Photographs Division, the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, and the Slavic and Central European Division. Mr. Fred Croxton became Director of the Reader Services Department. This department included the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the Federal Research Division, the General Reference and Bibliography Division, the Loan Division, the Science and Technology Division, the Serial Division, and the Stack and Reader Division, all of which had been a part of the original Reference Department.

Mr. Paul Berry, Director of the Reference Department was laterally transferred to head a new unit that was named The Library Environment Resources Office. As Director of that office, he was to have the responsibility for the entire physical plant, space planning, assignment of space, physical moves, and to oversee the completion of the new James Madison Memorial Building, etc. As a professionally trained librarian with many years of experience in the Library of Congress in a number of administrative positions, Mr. Berry took to his new job with the same dedication, skills and professionalism that had been the hall marks of his service as Director of the Reference Department and all the other jobs he had held before that.

The breakup of the Reference Department and Mr. Berry's transfer came as quite a shock not only to the members of the department itself but also to staff members of other departments and caused staff members throughout the library to wonder as to its cause and the rationale for the breakup of the second largest department in the Library of Congress.

Like Mr. Berry, the staff like good soldiers took their respective transfers into the two newly formed departments in the spirit of dutiful acceptance and cooperation, vowing to continue to work as hard as ever and to see to it that the Library's readers received the same quality service that they had received before under the old organization.

Although the staffs of the divisions of the former Reference Department were separated into new units with different heads, they continued to operate in the same dedicated fashion they had operated under the old arrangement. There was no indication that the various clienteles served felt any difference in the way that they were being served.

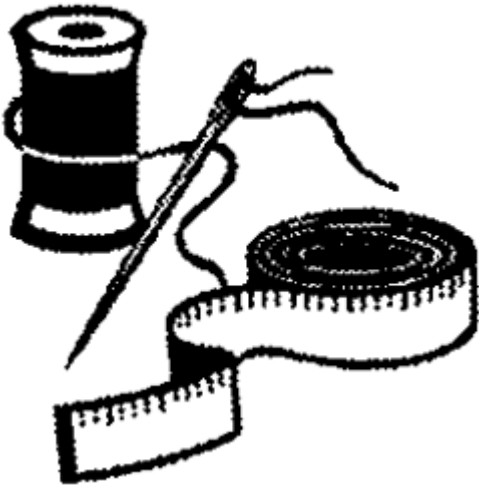
### **A Virginian, a Beltway Commuter and Special Assistant**



Library of Congress Management Team, September, 1973  
From left to right: Robert Land, L. Quincy Mumford,  
Paul L. Berry, John Finzi, the author  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress



The author in his office as Special Assistant for Planning Management,  
Research Services, Library of Congress, August 1982 Courtesy of the  
Library of Congress



## Chapter 29. With the Abolishment of the Reference Department I Become Special Assistant in the Research Department

AS Special Assistant for Planning Management in the abolished Reference Department I was given the choice of continuing in that position either in the Research Department or the Reader Services Department. I opted for the Research Department and became Dr. Fern's Special Assistant for Planning Management in the Research Department.

Up until this time, The Reference Department had been the second largest department of the Library in staff size, second only to the Processing Department, which was impacted by the reorganization when Dr. Boorstin chose that department's Director Mr. William Welsh to replace Mr. John Lorenz as Deputy Librarian of Congress. The breakup of the Reference Department also made a change in the chain of command of the of the Library. Until Mr. Mumford's retirement as the Librarian of Congress, when he and Mr. Lorenz were away, Mr. Paul Berry as the Director of the Reference Department served as the Acting Librarian of Congress. On those occasions when the three of them might be away at the same time the remaining officers of the former Reference Department (all of whom had had many years of experience in library service, administrative and otherwise) would be asked to serve in that capacity in the following order:

Assistant Director for Bibliographic and Reference Services  
and Chief of the General Reading Rooms Division  
Assistant Director for the Development of the Collections Special Assistant for  
Planning Management

This arrangement naturally- changed when Dr. Boorstin became Librarian of Congress and with his appointment of Mr. Welsh as Deputy Librarian.

As Special Assistant for Planning Management in The Research Department I was to do studies and surveys of department and division organizations and operations, and deal with and solve space and a myriad of other problems of the divisions of the department. By the end of 1977, plans for the physical rearrangement of the Rare Book, Music, and Motion Picture Reading Rooms I had completed had been approved and work was about



to begin on those projects. When completed, the rearrangement of space in each case was to provide for more efficient service to readers and improved staff working areas.



## Chapter 30. Dr. Boorstin Reorganizes Again, Creates the Research Services Department and I Continue as its Special Assistant

The Research Department and the Reader Services Department as organized by Dr. Boorstin in 1976 were short lived. By the spring of 1978 another reorganization was in process. This time Dr. Boorstin created what became known as the Research Services Department which brought back together again virtually all the divisions that had been a part of the old Reference Department, under new sub-structures known as directorates thus adding a new layer of administrators. We now had a Director for Area Studies who had oversight of the work of the African and Middle Eastern Division, the Asian Division, the European Division, and the Hispanic Division, each of which had its own Chief as its immediate administrative officer.

We had a Director for General Reference overseeing the services of the Collections Management Division, Federal Research Division, General Reading Rooms Division, Loan Division, Science and Technology Division, and Serial Division, each of which had its own Chief, as its immediate administrative officer.

We also had a Director for Special Collections who was charged with the general supervision of the Geography and Map Division, Manuscript Division, Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division, Music Division, the Prints and Photographs Division and the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, each of which had its own Chief as its immediate administrative officer. Dr. Alan Fern who had been the Director of the Research Department became Director of the Special Collections directorate. Elizabeth Stroup from the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped was appointed Director of General Reference directorate, and Frank McGowan from the Processing Department became Acting Director of the Area Studies directorate. He served in that capacity until Dr. Warren Tsuneishi who had been Chief of the Asian Division replaced him in 1979.

There was one addition to the new department. That was the Preservation Office which had a Chief as its immediate administrative officer.

I recall that when this new department was being put in place, I was called to the office of the Librarian and informed by Mr. Donald Curran who was Associate Librarian at the time that I was to continue as Special Assistant for Planning Management in the new Research Services Department, that he was being detailed as the

Acting Assistant Librarian for Research Services until such time as the Librarian appointed a permanent Assistant Librarian for Research Services to head the new department. He also advised me that the Librarian had appointed a search committee chaired by Dr. John Broderick, Chief of the Manuscript Division, which had been charged to find a qualified person to fill the position of Assistant Librarian for Research Services. Mr. Curran assumed the duties of Acting Librarian for Research Services on June 5, 1978, and continued in that capacity for the rest of the year. It was during this period that as the department's space planner I was faced with some of the most intense competition for each square foot of space available in the Library's buildings for the collections and reading rooms, and for making what was available used more efficiently. It was during this period that the Rare Book and Special Collections Reading Room rearrangement and refurbishment was completed, the Science Reading Room reorganization was finished, the improved room for viewing motion pictures was finally constructed, and the Music Reading Room rearrangement and refurbishment was completed.

By January of 1979, when Dr. Broderick's search committee had not been successful in finding a qualified candidate for the position of Assistant Librarian for Research Services, the Librarian appointed Dr. Broderick to that position. I was pleased to serve as his Special Assistant for Planning Management from the time he assumed the leadership of the new department almost continuously until his retirement with the exception of a period of time when I was detailed to the Library Environment Resources Office. I shall have more to say about that period later in this narrative.

During the forepart of 1979, as Dr. Broderick's Special Assistant for Planning Management I was challenged by and completed several long-range projects that he considered urgent, namely revisions of the Library of Congress Regulations made necessary by the reorganization of the department. Among these projects were the reestablishment of the department's duty officer system, and the expansion of the department's quick-copying service.

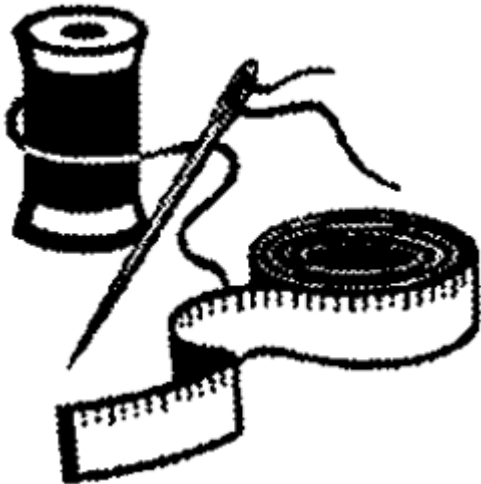
On May 22, 1979, upon Dr. Broderick's recommendation, I was awarded a Meritorious Service Award by Dr. Boorstin for the work I had done in connection with the physical rearrangement and refurbishment of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division. It was also during this year that along with other tasks, I had the pleasure of developing the logistics and plans for moving those divisions of the department that were scheduled to move into the Madison Building from the two older buildings in the following year, and I helped in the planning and establishment of the Performing Arts Library as an extension Library Service unit of the Library of Congress in the Kennedy Center Building.

The year 1980 saw the beginning of the moves of the first library units into the James Madison Memorial Building. The divisions of the Research Services Department were the first Library units to move in. Among the earliest was the Geography and Map Division. Its move began February 23 and was completed in a little over three weeks. It became an example of smooth, efficient library moving and was due to the cooperative efforts of the division's staff and the staff of the Collections Management Division.

As I write about this period, I can't help recalling the challenges that were faced in the moves of the various divisions of the department from the Thomas Jefferson Building and the John Adams Buildings into the mammoth James Madison Memorial Building. It was reported by the Architect of the Capitol at the time that the Madison

Building was large enough to place both the Thomas Jefferson and the John Adams buildings inside it! The moving of th divisions and their large collections into the new building tested the logistical skills as well as the mental and physical energy of the department's move team!

1981 saw the separation of the National Referral Center from the Science and Technology Division to take its place as a separate entity of the Research Services Department thus expanding the department by one more unit. That was also the last year that the Librarian's Annual Report lists Dr. Alan M. Fern as Director of Special Collections.



## Chapter 31. I am Saddened by Dr. Alan Fern's Resignation and I Transfer to the Library Environment Resources Office

Dr. Fern had resigned to go to the National Portrait Gallery in the previous spring. I was saddened to see him leave the Library because I considered him to be one of the most effective administrators that I had worked with in the Library of Congress. I had gotten to know him from the time he was Assistant Chief and then Chief of the Prints and Photographs Division and during the time I had served as his Special Assistant when he was Director of the Research Department. Through his last days as Director of Special Collections in the Research Services Department, he faced problems head on and was not afraid to make decisions. I felt his going was a great loss for the Library's future. His position as it was then constituted was never filled. In fact if one were to check the Annual Reports of the Librarian, the position of Director of Special Collections is listed as vacant in the reports published through 1987, which was the last year that the Librarian published the more complete, bound, hardback type of report that had been published as far back as the eighteen hundreds. The abbreviated report that replaced the older version was not only lacking in the kind of important organizational information that once graced its pages but also was lacking in substantive information about the activities of the Library.

In June of 1981, Mr. James Trew, Director of the Library Environment Resources Office requested that I be detailed to his office to assist him and the architect who had been commissioned to plan the renovation of the older library buildings. On June 15, 1981, Dr. Broderick sent me a memorandum which read as follows:

You are hereby detailed to the Library Environment Resources Office (LERO), for 30 days, effective June 15, 1981. Your duties will be to assist in the refinement of the Arthur Cotton Moore plans for renovation and restoration of the Thomas Jefferson and John Adams Buildings. This work will consist of reconciling Library needs and program approaches outlined by the various departments with those presented in the Moore plans and acting as coordinator between the Departments and LERO, and arranging for the transfer of pertinent information to Arthur Cotton Moore/Associates.

By this time also the moves of the various divisions and departments into the Madison building had been completed. To celebrate the completion of this major project, Dr. Boorstin held a grand reception in the Atrium of the Madison Building. I was surprised and pleased to receive the following personal letter from Dr. Boorstin:

*June 19, 1981*

*Dear Mr. D'Alessandro:*

*Our occupancy of the Madison Building marks a new era for the Library. The time has come to recognize and thank those of you who have made and will continue to make this move so successful. Your department director has indicated that you have played a significant role in the moving process. Bill Welsh and I want to thank you on behalf of the Library administration for a job well done.*

*I invite you to a reception on July 21 at 2:30 P.M. in the Madison Atrium in recognition of your contribution and to celebrate the Library's accomplishment of this difficult task.*

*Sincerely,*

*/s/ Daniel J. Boorstin*

*The Librarian of Congress*

I served as Mr. Trew's Special Assistant for Planning well beyond the initial thirty days, because Mr. Trew continued asking for extensions of my detail to his office up until March of 1982, when Mr. Trew asked for and got Dr. Broderick's approval for my transfer to LERO. I agreed because I was again doing the kind of building planning I had done as Business Manager in the Cleveland Public Library.

From March 29, 1982, as Mr. Trew's Special Assistant I had the pleasure of being involved in every aspect of the planning of the renovation and restoration of the Library's main building the Thomas Jefferson Building, and the John Adams Building. I also served as the liaison between the Library Environment Resources Office and key Library officials, the Architect of the Capitol and the Associate Architect.

On April 12, 1982, Mr. Trew and I were surprised and shocked to receive a memorandum from Mr. Glen Zimmerman then Associate Librarian for Management, advising us that since I had become a Special Assistant to a Director of an Office (LERO), and since I was no longer a Special Assistant to the Head of a department such as Research Services, I was to be deprived of my official parking space. Mr. Trew who considered this course of action illogical and uncalled for immediately strongly voiced his amazement and objections to Mr. Zimmerman, citing the fact that I had agreed to the lateral transfer for the good of the Library and without an increase in salary and should not be penalized in this way. When Mr. Zimmerman refused to reconsider his course of action, Mr. Trew advised me that he would not blame me if I decided to request to be reinstated in my former position as Special Assistant for Planning Management in the Research Services Department. Mr. Trew also advised me to present my case to Mr. Zimmerman. When this also fell on deaf ears, once again I found myself in the position of having to make another decision that had grave implications for my career. This time I found myself weighing my strong desire to work in a new unit of the Library that not only challenged me but gave me pleasure, against the feeling that I had to make a stand against an adverse administrative action.

This was another one of those occasions when I fell back on something father had taught us as children. In discussing right and wrong, he always told us, "If your mind and your heart tell you that you are being wronged, stand up for your rights no matter what it may cost you!" This was one of those times when my mind and my heart told me that I must stand up for my rights.

I contacted Dr. Broderick about coming back to work for him. He said that he would be glad to have me come back as his Special Assistant. I lost no time in setting the wheels in motion for my return to the Research Services Department. On April 14, 1982, I sent the following memo to Mr. Zimmerman, with copies to the Librarian of Congress Dr. Boorstin, the Deputy Librarian Mr. Welsh, Mr. Curran, the Associate Librarian of Congress, and other top officials:

*April 14, 1982*

*Glen A. Zimmerman*

*Associate Librarian for Management*

*Official Status and Revocation of Parking Privileges*

*This refers to your memorandum of April 12, 1982, advising me that as a result of my recent appointment to the Library Environment Resources Office as a Special Assistant for Library Planning, I am no longer to be considered an officer of the Library and that my parking permit has been revoked accordingly, effective April 26, 1982. I take strong exception to this unfair and adverse action for the many substantive reasons I cited to you during our meeting of April 8, 1982. In my current position I act and serve at least in every official capacity that I did in my former position and my responsibilities in no way have diminished. I did not ask to be transferred to the Library Environment Resources Office, but rather was asked by the Library if I would consider doing so. I believed, and apparently the Library believed that I could make a most valuable and unique contribution to the Library planning process. I agreed to a lateral transfer in the best interests of the Library. At no time during the process was I advised by any Library official that my appointment would result in a change of my status or parking privileges. In this regard the Library took unfair advantage of me.*

*In the light of what appears to be an irrevocable decision on your part, I hereby request that I be reinstated in my former position as an official of the Library in Research Services with the attendant parking privilege. I have discussed the matter with Mr. Trew and Dr. Broderick. Mr. Trew has stated that he will agree to my release and Dr. Broderick has informed me that he is willing to return me to my former position as a Research Services Department Staff Officer for which there is a budget number. I further request that my reinstatement take place without fail and without prejudice prior to April 26, 1982.*

*cc: Messrs. Boorstin, Welsh, Curran, Broderick,  
Trew, Garvey Mortimer*





## Chapter 32. I Return to My Job as Special Assistant in the Research Services Department

I returned to my old job as Special Assistant for Planning Management in the Research Services Department on May 1, 1982, five days after the deadline I had set in my letter. I was welcomed with open arms by my former colleagues. This helped to erase from my psyche the hurt that had been dealt me by a Library bureaucrat. Nevertheless in the eleven months that I had spent in the Library Environment Resources Office, I had managed to get the total renovation planning of the two older buildings off the ground and running.

Although I was no longer on the staff of the Library Environment Resources Office, I continued to be heavily involved in the work of the renovation and restoration of the two older buildings. That was because the divisions of the Research Services Department occupied much of the space in both buildings. As the department's planning officer, I was continually called to meetings with Mr. Trew, with the Architect of the Capitol, and the associate architects Arthur Cotton Moore and his designers and engineers to resolve space and design problems related to the renovation and restoration work of the department's divisions. Many of my hours and days were spent in this kind of work.

In addition I was the one who was called by the department's divisions to help solve the many emergencies that arose during the course of the work of the contractors in both buildings, which was going on simultaneously in the two structures. The Architect of the Capitol and Dr. Boorstin had decided that it was strategically in the best interests of the Library, the public, and the staff to have the work of the renovation scheduled in phases in a portion of each building in order to disrupt as little as possible service to the Congress and its other clientele. While going through the various phases of the project it was inevitable that emergencies occurred from time to time that not only affected the work of the staff but also interrupted the service to the library's users.

On a number of occasions, emergencies occurred because of contractor errors and when contractors neglected to alert or consult staff that might be affected on those occasions when they were to perform work or use materials that might affect not only the staff's ability to perform its work or even might have affected the health and safety of the staff and the public. Power outages or power losses occurred after contract workers had left for the day. Each time this was due to contractor error or worker neglect. On other occasions during the renovation and restoration of the John Adams Building, it had to be evacuated because of contract work activity. These were times when the staff and public found that it was impossible to breathe the air in the building and had to be evacuated immediately.

One evacuation was made necessary when a floor sealant being used by contract workers produced such a heavy and extremely sickening odor that it nauseated the staff and readers working in the division reading rooms and offices of the building. Another occurred when what seemed to be an acrid, chemical smell permeated the John Adams Building as a result of work being done on a heat exchanger. The work of the staff and reader service was also affected by required asbestos removal in various places. As the department's Special Assistant, I was the person called by the division chiefs to deal with these and other problems they faced. I have often said that I had one of the most interesting jobs in the Library of Congress. Excitement seemed to go along with the job. For example, I was at my desk in my office working late one winter night. At about 9:00 P.M. I heard what sounded like a heavy rush of water. It seemed to be happening in a slop sink closet that was located to the right of my office in the main office area known as the northwest pavilion. On opening the door of the closet I was faced with a serious flood situation. Torrents of water were pouring down through the closet, and on down to the floors below! I immediately called for help from the Collections Maintenance staff and the Library Buildings staff, and then ran up to the next floor to the Hispanic Division where I knew parts of its book collection would be endangered by the water because it was directly above. I was met there by the Collection Maintenance staff who had brought large plastic sheets to cover the book stacks. We managed to get the majority of the books covered. Fortunately the small amount of books located in the area closest to where the water was coming down were the only ones damaged. The Library Buildings staff had rushed to the attic above the areas in question and discovered a broken attic window. The water lines located there had frozen and burst. The Library Buildings staff fixed the window and made quick plumbing repairs stopping the flow of water. That was one of several nights in my career at the Library of Congress that I did not leave the library until midnight because of one or another emergency. The others are ones that I have decided to forget!

I never had a dull day during my entire career in that magnificent library! My job changed and developed from the time it was established by Paul Berry. While there were many routine administrative duties, there were those other specific areas of responsibility that I have cited that made my job so very interesting.

The year 1987 was marked by the closing of the Main Reading Room for renovation and the retirement of Daniel d. Boorstin as Librarian of Congress. Dr. Boorstin had presided over the planning of the renovation of the Thomas Jefferson and John Adams Buildings. The finished drawings and specifications as worked out by Architects Arthur Cotton Moore Associates in conjunction with the Architect of the Capitol had incorporated structures known as Office Colonnades in some of the larger areas of the Jefferson Building known architecturally as curtains. They had been approved by the Librarian because Arthur Cotton Moore had convinced him that they would provide much needed additional floor space, and apparently because the design of the Colonnade had won an architectural award.

As a long time library space planner who has always subscribed to and followed the philosophy and rules of space planning found in the Librmjz profession's bible for space planning entitled *Planning Academic and Research Libraries* by Harvard University's Keyes Metcalf, I found it hard to agree that the construction of the mammoth, fixed two level structure known as the Office Colonnade in the beautiful curtain spaces of the Library of Congress either added to the beauty or added much more usable floor space in the Library's most beautiful building on Capitol Hill. One of the basic tenets that I have subscribed to is that openness is to be maintained in planning all areas of a library building not only for its current needs but also to provide flexibility in the use of the library's

space in the future as changes in the use of the library's space might occur in the years to come. The introduction of the fixed Office Colonnades in the curtain spaces of the Jefferson Building has made any change in the use of that space in future years impossible, that is, without the great cost that would be entailed in the demolition of the Colonnades, should any future Librarian of Congress find the need to make a major change in the use of the space now encumbered by those huge installations.

Even though the Office Colonnades provide a mezzanine which the architects had said would provide additional space, the staff who have occupied the Colonnades have found that there is a loss of usable space at floor level for the following reasons: First, the Colonnade structure like a huge boat, placed in the center of the large curtain spaces, has necessarily left five foot wide corridors as passageways on either side of the entire length of the Colonnades, leaving a comparatively small amount of usable space between the full length of the left and right walls of the Colonnade, which are made up of glass-paned doors, which are architectural features and not usable doorways. Usable floor space at floor level within the Colonnade is further reduced by the steel posts that support the mezzanine floor above. The walls of glass doors and the posts make it difficult to locate desks, vertical files and other necessary equipment, making work spaces tight, and cluttered. The spaces fore and aft of the Colonnades have turned out to be spaces that are difficult to use in a practical way. The Office Colonnade may have won Architect Arthur Cotton Moore an award for its unusual design, however, some staff who have been assigned work space in an Office Colonnade have found it to be ergonomically impractical.

Although Arthur Cotton Moore's Office Colonnade is no great example of openness as far as library architecture is concerned, nevertheless Dr. Boorstin's legacy as far as the use of the Library is concerned is one of openness! As one who believed that the Library of Congress was "the People's Library," he is credited with having ordered the opening of the Jefferson Building's massive bronze doors, at the top of the great stone front stairway. They had been closed to the public several years earlier during Mr. Mumford's term as Librarian of Congress for safety and security reasons, and because the entrance at ground floor level had been deemed more user friendly for the handicapped and the elderly who had found the great stone staircase difficult to climb. Dr. Boorstin believed that since the great doors led directly into the Great Hall and from there right into the Main Reading Room, people should be allowed to take that route into the Library if they felt so inclined. As I mentioned earlier in this account, this entrance into the Great Hall of the Library was open on my arrival as a new staff member in 1970, and that I found the entrance exciting and breathtaking because of the beauty of the Great Hall and its proximity to the most beautiful reading room in the nation. There was no question that the entrance was a better introduction to the Library architecturally than the ground floor entrance and it most certainly brought the public into the Library's premier reading room more quickly, and so it was reasonable for Dr. Boorstin to reinstate that entrance as the Library's main entrance. He also ordered the removal of curtains that had served as a privacy screen and a noise baffle for the reading desks located on either side of the passageway at the west entrance of the reading room in order to make the reading room more inviting.

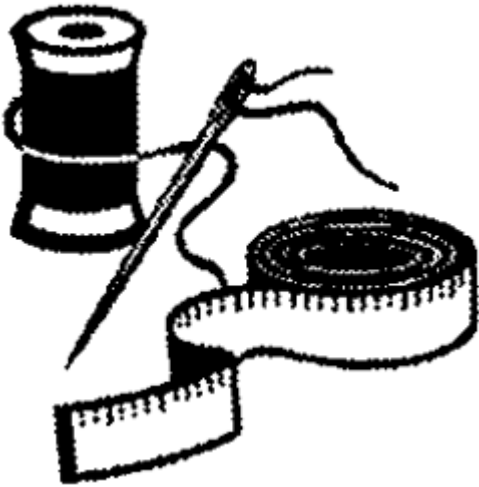
Dr. Boorstin's open door policy was a smashing success! However, in addition to readers and scholars who came to use the library's vast resources, it brought in many tourists who only succeeded in disturbing the bonafide users of the Main Reading Room. Until the day I retired, I recall the reference librarians continued to fight the battle of trying to steer the tourists to the visitor's observation gallery above.

On March 10, 1986, the tourist problem paled into insignificance when major unrest occurred in the Main Reading Room precipitated by an act of Congress. In one of its attempts to control the deficit and balance the budget the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act was enacted. It made major cuts in the Library's funding, which made it necessary for the Library to reduce staff and shorten the hours of the reading room. As a result the reading room was closed on Sundays and all evenings except Wednesday evening.

A band of readers organized to protest the reductions in library service under "Books Not Bombs" as their battle cry, staged a sit-in in the Main Reading Room, refusing to leave at 5:30 P.M. the new evening closing time. I recall that the Library Administration took no action the first two nights, thinking the protest would not continue after a few nights. On the third night when it appeared that the protesters intended to continue their sit-in every night until 9:30 P.M. which had been the normal closing time, the administration on advice of its legal counsel, started to have the protesters arrested. Eighteen arrests were made. This of course made the newspapers, radio and TV, and had its repercussions in the halls of Congress.

By July the Congress had passed a supplemental appropriations bill, which provided the necessary funds to allow the Library to restore the reading hours that had been cut. It took the ire of the Library's regular readers to show the Library Administration and the members of Congress how they felt about the services of the nation's library. The Library went back to its normal hours on July 10, 1986, much to the relief of the reading room staff who felt that the Library's rapport with its readers had been damaged. The dedicated reference librarians who staffed the Main Reading Room soon restored that rapport and the reputation of the library and its ability to provide continuing excellent reference service during hours that met the needs of its readers.

Service to readers in the Main Reading Room continued without interruption until December 9, 1987 when the library's renovation schedule made it necessary to close it temporarily, for approximately one year, according to the Architect of the Capitol, in order to restore it to its original architectural beauty and condition. The European, Hispanic, Science, and Rare Book and Special Collections reading rooms were already in temporary and smaller locations because of the renovation. As a result those of us in the Research Services Department Office and the General Reference Directorate responsible for renovation planning, through well thought out advance planning, arranged to provide general reference assistance in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room in the Thomas Jefferson Building and in the Social Science Reading Room in the John Adams Building. The recently expanded adjacent Computer Catalog Center and Photocopy Center in the Adams Building along with speedy general book delivery service from the Jefferson Building collections softened the impact of the closing of the Main Reading room, so that readers accepted the temporary change in reading rooms. As it turned out the Architect's estimate that the Main Reading Room would be closed for a year proved to be wishful thinking. It took three years to complete its renovation. It would be 1990 before it would be reopened.



## Chapter 33. Daniel J. Boorstin Retires and is Succeeded by James H. Billington

The year 1987 was marked not only by the closing of the Main Reading Room but also by the retirement of Dr. Boorstin as Librarian of Congress and his assumption of the role of Librarian Emeritus. His successor was Dr. James H. Billington, again a scholar like Boorstin. As the thirteenth Librarian of Congress, Dr. Billington took the oath of office on September 14, 1987, after having sailed through a Senate confirmation hearing unlike Boorstin whose appointment had been opposed not only by the American Library Association speaking for the professional librarians of the country, and by members of the staff organizations of the Library of Congress. This time there were no strong voices questioning the appointment of a non-professional librarian to head the nation's library as there had been not only with Dr. Boorstin's appointment but also years earlier when poet Archibald MacLeish was appointed in the late thirties.

Apparently the American Library Association, the nation's professionals, and the Library of Congress staff had decided that it was no longer important for a professional librarian to be the Librarian of Congress or that it was useless to object to the appointment of a non-librarian to administer the nation's top library even though well known, well qualified top professional library administrators could be found in various parts of the country. No one in the professional library community raised the question "Would the President of the United States appoint and the Senate confirm a non-surgeon to be Surgeon General or a non-lawyer to the Supreme Court of the United States?" In fact, some representatives of the American Library Association and representatives of Library of Congress staff organizations made statements favorable to Billington's appointment. The staff of the Library of Congress welcomed the new Librarian of Congress, respecting him for his reputation as a scholar, for his drive and for the future that he envisioned for the library.

History seemed to be repeating itself. During his time, MacLeish had used the phrase, "the reference library of the people" to describe the nation's library. Boorstin in his time referred to it as "the people's library." Billington on the other hand coined the phrase, the "living encyclopedia of democracy." Like Boorstin, Billington immediately began to plan to reorganize the Library.

By this time we had gotten used to being reorganized from time to time, so when Billington made his announcement, we were ready to bite the bullet. Some of us in the Research Services Department were pleased when Ellen Hahn, the Library's highly competent and hard working chief of the General Reading Rooms

Division was selected by Billington to head his Management and Planning Committee which was to work with a private consulting firm to mastermind the reorganization. After going through a couple of phases, the structure of the newly reorganized Library had not only seen changes in the organization of the units that had been traditionally responsible for reference and collections services but also in personnel. The Research Services Department had been replaced by two new departments, Collections Services and Constituent Services. In 1988, while the reorganization was in progress, the Research Services Department had lost Dr. John Broderick as Assistant Librarian for Research Services, to retirement and Billington had appointed Dr. Warren Tsuneishi Chief of the Asian Division as Acting Assistant Librarian for about a year. Also Dr. Billington had created the position of Associate Librarian for Management Services and placed Don Curran in that position as Acting Associate Librarian for Management Services while still holding the position Associate Librarian of Congress. The department in its last year (1989) as Research Services saw Don Curran back as its Acting Assistant Librarian again. He had been replaced in the position of Associate Librarian for Management Services by Rhoda W. Canter who had been one of the principal officers of the Management firm that Dr. Billington had brought in to survey the Library for its reorganization. With the birth of Constituent Services in 1990, Don Curran's title changed to Acting Associate Librarian for Constituent Services. At the same time he lost his title as Associate Librarian of Congress and was named Associate Librarian for Operations. As Dr. Billington's reorganization continued Mr. Curran's titles continued to change. By 1991 Curran had been changed from Acting to Associate Librarian for Constituent Services and had lost his position of Associate Librarian for Operations. That position had been abolished from the Library's table of organization. In its place, Dr. Billington had created a job known as Associate Librarian for Science and Technology Information and placed William W. Ellis in that slot.

The position of Associate Librarian for Operations had disappeared as quickly as it had come into being, however, by 1993, Dr. Billington had added another top level position to his immediate office staff, and that was the position of Chief of Staff. He filled that position by appointing Suzanne E. Thorin, who had rapidly risen in the administrative ranks in about a dozen years. She had come to the Library as an assistant in the Library's Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. After a short time had joined the staff of the General Reference Division where she had quickly risen to the position of Chief of the Division. Billington was impressed by her brightness, enthusiasm and ability and tapped her for his immediate staff. I fortunately continued to serve as Mr. Curran's Special Assistant for Planning Management in Constituent Services.

One of the greatest changes wrought by this reorganization occurred in the department's General Reading Rooms Division which was the Library's basic provider of service to readers. Formerly the division's reference librarians had been assigned to and served in sections such as the Main Reading Room Section and the Social Science Reading Room Section. With the reorganization, reference librarians were assigned according to their reference specialties, into subject oriented teams, such as History, Arts and Humanities, Business, Social Sciences, Genealogy, etc. With the exception of Genealogy and Business, all the other teams were to serve in the Main Reading Room, when it reopened. The Genealogy specialists continued to serve in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room, while those in Business served in the Social Science Reading Room. When the Main Reading Room closed for renovation on December 9, 1987 we knew we were going to lose 200 seats for readers. Initially we planned to make available space in the pavilion of the Local history and Genealogy Reading Room, and to make available the European and Hispanic reading rooms on Saturdays, and the Manuscript Reading Room

on Sundays for the displaced Main Reading Room readers. When these arrangements did not work out, staff was moved over to the Social Science Reading Room on the fifth floor of the John Adams Building, where a renovated adjacent room equipped as a Computer Catalog Center with sixteen computers, an enlarged Photocopy Center, and a new service desk helped to make the Social Science Reading Room a suitable substitute for the Main Reading Room while it was closed.

I can recall working with the supervisors and staff of the General Reading Rooms: Division helping to solve the problems that occurred from time to time when readers missed the accommodations of the Main Reading Room, and as they tried to get used to the physical dislocations caused by some of the temporary service arrangements in the Social Science Reading Room. As a former reference librarian, I could personally feel the discomfort experienced by the reference librarians who also missed the Main Reading Room as much as the readers did. I did all that I could to expedite their requests for equipment, supplies, physical adjustments and other needs to help them cope more easily with the deficiencies of their temporary work stations. To this day I treasure a seventeen word note written to me by reference librarian Judith Farley on the reopening of the Main Reading Room in 1990. She wrote as follows”

*To Eddie-*

*Your support over the years has been invaluable to all of us in the Main Reading Room.*

*Love,*

*Judith*

Just as the new library administration had lost no time in reorganizing the library, it also lost little time in making changes in the architectural plans and specifications for renovating the Thomas Jefferson and the John Adams Buildings that had been completed by the Associate Architects Arthur Cotton Moore and the Architect of the Capitol, and approved by the previous administration. Enough major changes were requested, especially in the completed plans for the European, Asian, African and Middle Eastern Division reading rooms that made it necessary for the Architect of the Capitol to require Arthur Cotton Moore to go back to the drawing board. Those of us who had worked with the architects were told by representatives of the Architect of the Capitol that this would push back the completion date of the entire renovation indefinitely and increase costs which they did not care to estimate and which would have to be met by cutting out some of the previously planned architectural features required for readers and the staffs. Nevertheless Reading Rooms that had been designed and approved by the Chiefs and the staffs of the divisions involved, and the previous administration, after many months of work by” all concerned were redesigned to incorporate the new administration’s changes. In addition to changes in design, there were also changes in the location of two divisions and their reading rooms. The African and Middle Eastern and the Asian Division Reading Rooms which had been located in the John Adams Building for years in proximity to the bookstacks housing their large collections were to be moved according to the new administration’s plan into the Thomas Jefferson Building, where there was not enough space in the bookstacks adjacent to their proposed new locations to accommodate the majority of their collections. Although the staff, Division administrators and those of us in the department office advised against separating a staff from its collections for obvious reasons, the plan to do so was still go as far as the top administrators of the Library were concerned up to the day, that I retired.





## Chapter 34. Summing it up on My Retirement

BY the time that I retired on January 2, 1993 one of, the reading rooms redesigned—the European Reading Room was completed, giving me the opportunity to see it in its finished state. The new plan had required the installation of book shelving quite high on the left side wall of the reading room. In order to provide access to the books on those high shelves, the architects had constructed staircases at various intervals along that range of shelving. The staircases extended out into the reading room, encroaching on the space provided for reading tables. Also for some reason we could not fathom, the staircases as constructed were narrow and rail-less, wch would make climbing them to reach the uppermost shelves hazardous for the staff and public. I recall the division staff saying that they would hesitate using the staircases, that they planned to put non-used books on those high shelves just for show, so they would not have to climb those stairs to retrieve books.

I had been hoping that in the years since I left the library that this architectural problem had been eliminated or corrected. I have learned that is not the case. The fact is that not only does the European Division have the impractical narrow staircases, they are also to be found in the African and Middle Eastern and in the Asian Divisions’! I understand the Staircases are not being used by either the staff or the public, that the staff in each of the reading rooms has filled the high book shelves with “nice looking” sets with “pretty bindings.”

As I write this part of my narrative, I have also learned that the African and Middle Eastern and the Asian Divisions and their reading rooms have been moved from the John Adams Building into the Thomas Jefferson Building according to plan, without their book collections which still remain in the John Adams Building. I understand that there are only two book deliveries a day from the Adams Building and that the few deck attendants who service their collections also have other duties. I can’t help but wonder about the effect all this has had on the quality of the Library’s service to readers. I understand that there is the hope that the book collections may be moved to the Jefferson Building in about a year.

The Main Reading Room I am happy to say also was completed by the time that I retired so that I was able to see some of the finished improvements that I had helped to plan for its renovation. The room indeed had been restored as the jewel that it had been when it had originally been opened in 1897, along with improvements such as the installation of cable for computers at every reading desk as well! My joy was dampened somewhat when it was discovered shortly after the room’s opening that dampness was seeping through the roof over the beautifully redecorated dome of the Main Reading Room, threatening to undo the restored artwork.



With Charles Prince of Wales on November 11, 1985, author with coat over arm. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

I was particularly saddened by this because I had campaigned vigorously for several years to get the Architect of the Capitol to do something about replacing the entire copper roof of the entire building. I recall that when Arthur Cotton Moore was hired as the Associate Architect to develop the plans and specifications and construction drawings for the renovation, I was assigned to tour the Thomas Jefferson and the John Adams Buildings with Mr. Moore, some of his staff, and the Architect of the Capitol and some of his staff. At that time, I made a point of showing them the many places in the two buildings that had suffered water leaks over the years, roof leaks as well as plumbing water line leaks in walls and ceilings, etc. and there were many. The problem areas in the domed ceiling of the Main Reading Room were pointed out to them with great emphasis. I showed them place after place where paint had been peeling and plaster was falling because of continued leaks and water seepage that had been occurring over the years. I recall saying to the architects, “I hope that you will see that all these roof, wall and ceiling problems are completely eliminated before any interior renovation and restoration work is done.”

I can see them even now nodding and saying, “Oh! Yes, Mr. D’Alessandro, we will,” as they made notes. That was not the only time that I urged that the Thomas Jefferson roof be repaired or replaced completely and that the other areas I have mentioned be attended to before any interior work was done. There should be many memos in the archives that I have written over the years that will attest to the fact that I strongly felt that such repairs should be accomplished before any restoration and beautification of the interior of the Thomas Jefferson and the John Adams Buildings was attempted. These memos were sent to the Buildings Management Division of the Library and to the Office of the Architect of the Capitol. As things go in the bureaucracy of the government, my urgings did not bear fruit. A great deal of the interior renovation artwork was done before the roof of the Jefferson Building and other leaks in both buildings were fixed, witness the fact that the interior painting of the Main

Reading dome showed signs of dampness almost immediately after its reopening. The Architect of the Capitol did not ask for funds from the Congress for the Jefferson Building roof until Fiscal Year 1994, when he finally requested \$7,000,000. Lip until that time he had unsuccessfully chosen to try to have sections of the copper roof patched. I understand that the job of replacing the entire roof finally began in 1996, and is nearing completion as I write this in the spring of 1998.

In the summer of 1992, I decided that since I would be celebrating my 80 birthday in March of the following year that it was time that I retire, and gave notice to Mr. Curran. I had had a long and a most satisfying career in two libraries a large urban public library and in the nation's library. From the time that I started as a page in Cleveland's Brownell Junior High School Library in 1927, I had spent the better part of 65 years doing library work. It was more than time for me to leave public service even though I knew I would miss all of the wonderful experiences that one has as an employee of the Library of Congress. I had derived such great satisfaction from my work as an officer of the Library for twenty-two and a half years and from the many fun and happy events that came my way as an employee of the Library. During my tour of duty on Capitol Hill, I was privileged to see England's Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, some of our presidents and their wives and other dignitaries when they visited the Library, and on occasion to meet other persons of note. Earlier in this narrative I described the time that Mr. Mumford, Mr. Berry and I were privileged to visit First Lady Patricia Nixon, and then there was the afternoon of November 11, 1985 when I and other staff members were privileged to meet Charles Prince of Wales in the Great Hall of the Library of Congress.

Then there were the many Library programs, literary and musical that I enjoyed during some evenings after work. I shall never forget the many hours of enjoyment provided by the Juilliard String Quartet, the thrill of listening to poetry readings by the various poet laureates who have held that important post over the years along with dramatic readings done by people like Burgess Meredith and so many others like him who have graced the stage of the Library's Coolidge Auditorium. The foregoing are only a few examples of the many wonderful experiences that came my way as an employee of the Library of Congress, experiences that I shall remember with pleasure for the rest of my days.

Equally important were the many co-workers and associates at the Library of Congress who became my friends and will never be forgotten. As true colleagues they did not let me leave the service without a great going away party, which was held on December 30, 1992. I had hoped that I could leave quietly without any fanfare because I feared that I might get emotional and show my true feelings when it came to leaving the many friends and associates I had come to admire and respect in the Library of Congress. My colleagues would have none of that. At the party, Mr. Curran toasted me in his usual eloquent manner, after which he presented me with several items that have become special mementos. They were, two priceless solid brass bookends made by Virginia Metalcrafters Inc. made to look like the massive historic front doors of the Thomas Building of the Library of Congress the one known as Humanitas and the other known as Intellectus, which I proudly use on my bookshelves in my home in Westlake, Ohio, a beautifully framed document conferring upon me the Library of Congress' Award for Distinguished Service, which I also proudly display on the wall in my den above my computer. It serves as a warm reminder that I once was privileged to serve in the greatest library in the world! I also received a Library of Congress Library card. Last but not least was a book the blank pages of which had been inscribed with notes from my many associates. Every now and then I read through it to recall fond memories of those who

were an important part of my professional life on Capitol Hill for more than two decades. People like Don Curran, who wrote:

*Dear Eddie,*

*First and foremost-thank you for all the help you've given to me over the years. Secondly thank you for 65 years of service to the library community. You have set a standard of excellence that is admired and respected by us all.*

And Dr. Thomas Mann, reference librarian and a main-stay in the Main Reading Room, who wrote the following message:

*Ed,*

*You are a librarian's librarian the -best I've ever met. You've set an example of service to which I will always aspire.*

And Science Reference Librarian Connie Carter, who wrote:

*Dear Ed,*

*Many, many thanks for all your help, good counsel, sound advice, common sense, and support during our many "disasters"—flood, fire, asbestos, dust, dirt.*

*You know them all.*

The foregoing are a small sampling of the many messages written in my retirement memory book, messages that help me to remember the many fine people who were an important part of my professional career. I owe so much to so many people who have touched me in one way or another during my career as a librarian and public servant. I thank God for bringing all of them into my life and also for blessing me with such a long and rewarding career in a profession that is not properly assessed among professions. And finally, the greatest debt that I owe, is the one I owe both my parents for giving me life, and especially to father for his good counsel and support over the years, which in the last analysis made it possible for me to become what and who I am, a happily retired old-time librarian!



# Epilogue

Rocco D'Alessandro, master tailor sired six sons. In his lifetime he was able to see the four who survived succeed in their chosen fields and establish their own families, families with sons and daughters who have also reached their majority and have joined the ranks of productive citizens as the twentieth century comes to a close. Rocco D'Alessandro's legacy is the family he established in the United States of America.

It started with Nicholas Salvatore D'Alessandro (Nicola), (Nick) who as a medical doctor served his fellow man in a long, general medical practice and as Cleveland's Police Surgeon well and for many years. At his death in 1975 the City of Cleveland saw fit to honor his passing with a full police honor guard and motorcycle escort from the church to the cemetery.

Nick was followed by Sol (Solly), (Mario Saverio), who as a master printer and lithographer, by dint of hard work rose from the ranks to head his company (The Horn & Norris Lithograph Company) for many years, until his retirement. Blessed with a pleasing tenor voice, he was as well known among Barber Shop Quartet aficionados as he was among printers and lithographers. They joined in mourning Sol's passing in 1980.

Then there was Arthur (Art), (Arturo), who as a general surgeon not only served long and well in a civilian practice but also served as a battlefield surgeon from the landing in Normandy on D Day until the end of World War II. During his civilian practice he helped found Parma General Hospital and served as chief of surgery there for a number of years. On retiring from his medical practice, Art served as Medical Director for Central Reserve Life for several years. His many former associates at the hospital and at Central Reserve Life marked doctor Art's passing in 1989 with numerous verbal and written accolades.

I as the fifth of father's six sons was fortunate to have been chosen to serve in two of the greatest libraries in the world—the Cleveland Public Library and the Library of Congress in a career that extended over six decades.

In the writing of the pages of this book over the past two and a half years, I have come to the conclusion that my brothers and I had been blessed and privileged to be Americans because father had had the vision and the courage to migrate as he did, sans parental blessing, to the United States of America at the turn of the century.

