



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

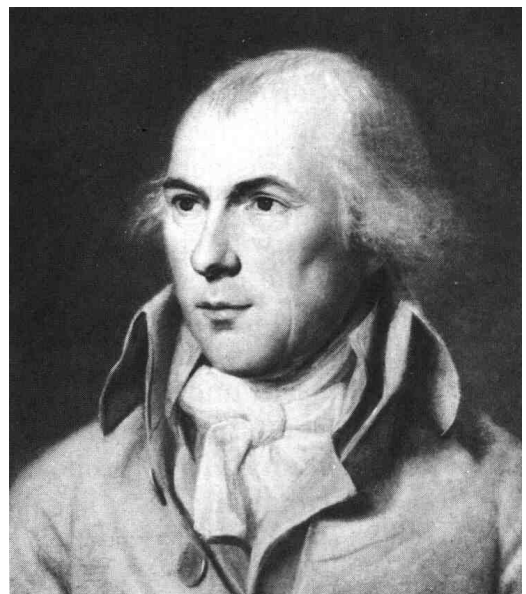
Government Information and Law Depository Centennial:

*Miami University's Government
Information and Law Department
Celebrates 100 years
as a Federal Depository Library*

*Miami University Libraries
Government Information and Law
017 King Library
Oxford, Ohio 45056
513 529-3342*

*Walter Havighurst Special Collections
321 King Library
Oxford, Ohio
513 529-3323*

*A popular government without
popular information, or the means
of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to
a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps,
both. Knowledge will forever govern
ignorance; and a people who mean
to be their own Governors, must arm
themselves with the power which
knowledge gives.*



James Madison
Letter to W.T. Berry, August 4, 1822

The Federal Depository Program

“The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) was established by Congress to ensure that the American public has access to its Government’s information. Since 1813, depository libraries have safeguarded the public’s right to know by collecting, organizing, maintaining, preserving, and assisting users with information from the Federal Government. The FDLP provides Government information at no cost to designated depository libraries throughout the country and territories. These depository libraries, in turn, provide local, no-fee access to Government information in an impartial environment with professional assistance.

As institutions committed to equity of access and dedicated to free and unrestricted public use, the nation’s nearly 1,250 depository libraries serve as one of the vital links between “We the people” and our Government. Anyone can visit Federal depository libraries and use the Federal depository collections which are filled with information on careers, business opportunities, consumer information, health and nutrition, legal and regulatory information, demographics, and numerous other subjects.

The Depository Library Council (DLC) to the Public Printer was established in 1972 to provide advice on policy matters relating to the FDLP. The primary focus of the DLC’s work is to advise the Public Printer, the Superintendent of Documents, and appropriate members of GPO staff on practical options for the efficient management and operation of the FDLP.



The authority for the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and the legal obligations of designated Federal depository libraries are found in 44 United States Code §§1901–1616.”

FDLP

<http://www.fdlp.gov/home/about>

Miami University’s Depository History

Although the Miami University Libraries are celebrating their centennial as a U.S. federal depository in 2009, the University has been an official recipient of government publications for over 150 years.

In 1859, two years after the Department of Interior established the depository program, Miami University was listed as a recipient of documents from the 35th Congress (1857-1859). Librarian William McSurely reported to the Board of Trustees in 1909 an acknowledgement of Miami’s receiving government publications as early as 1856.



Miami lost their depository designation for the first time when the university closed in 1873, though they regained it once more when they reopened 12 years later.

Confusion surrounding Miami’s official date of designation began in 1906, when the Superintendent of Documents suspended the University’s status to correct a redistricting error. After intense lobbying efforts, Miami regained status in 1909.



Librarian Jean Sears wrote a lucid and thoroughly researched article on Miami’s depository status for the Ohio publication, *Docs Prescriptions*. The Miami University libraries are pleased to include this article in conjunction with our 100th (official) year as a United States Federal depository.

William Cuthbertson
Government Documents Librarian

The following article by Jean Sears is reproduced by permission from *Docs Prescriptions* No. 67, Fall 2007.

**Miami University's Depository Status
(and How It Was Affected by OSU and Dayton Metro Library)**

Jean L. Sears
Miami University

The last issue of *Docs Prescriptions* (no.66, Spring 2007) contained an article by Sherry Moeller on the Ohio State University's quest for depository status. Her story has a connection to how Miami University became a depository library. Miami University became a depository library in 1909 – for the third time!

Before the establishment of a depository program, government publications were distributed to all libraries. In the early years of the federal government there were occasional laws directing the distribution of specific publications to all libraries. This distribution was made ongoing in 1813. The 1903 *Annual Report to the Public Printer* states:

Almost from the beginning of the Government until 1857 all incorporated historical associations, colleges, and universities were supplied regularly with public documents, and were virtually depositories. The regular distribution was made under the direction of the Secretary of State. (p.16)

Miami had a collection of books by 1818 (Baer, p.86). It is likely Miami received some of the government publications that were distributed to all libraries in this pre-depository period. It is not known exactly how Miami became a depository for the first time. Librarian William McSurely states in his annual report to the President and the Board of Trustees in 1909:

This library has been a depository for government documents for many years; Dr. McFarland [professor and librarian] says that it was a depository for government documents when he came here in 1856, and has been ever since (p.82).

The depository library program was established under the Department of the Interior in 1857. The first published record of depository libraries is found in the *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior* for 1859. It includes three distribution lists for major groups of public documents. Miami University appears on one of these lists as receiving documents of the first session of the 35th Congress (p.136). This provides support for the belief that Miami continued to receive government publications under the newly established depository program. No complete list of depository libraries appears to have been published until 1878 when the Public Documents Division of the Interior Department published its first annual report on the distribution of public documents. Miami University is listed as a designated depository library for the 3rd congressional district (p.7).

The depository library program was transferred to the Government Printing Office in 1895. Lists of depository libraries were occasionally included in the *Annual Report of the Public Printer*. The first list published by the Government Printing office, in its 1895 annual report, continued to include Miami University (p.39). The 1902 annual report is the first to list dates of depository designation. Miami is listed with a designation date of 1884, in spite of having appeared in the Department of Interior lists many years before that date (p.27). Therefore, Miami appears to have become a depository library for the second time in 1884. Had Miami been a depository previously at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior without being designated by a representative? Or had Miami had a previous designation, lost it, and been redesignated? According to the 1907 *Annual Report of the Public Printer*:

Designations may be changed at the will of the Senator, Member, or Delegate at the commencement of any Congress, and as the designators change often, the life of a library as a depository is apt to be short. (p.357-358)

Or did redistricting lead to a new designation? It may be significant that Miami's 1884 designation took place during a brief period (1883-1885) when Miami was located in the 7th congressional district. The designation was made by the representative from the 7th district, Henry L. Morey. Before and after that time Miami was located in the 3rd congressional district. Perhaps redistricting led to a vacancy that Miami was appointed to fill regardless of Miami's previous status in another district.

The depository library lists during this time often did not include the congressional district. Those that did – the 1878 Interior Dept. report and the 1901 *Annual Report of the Public Printer* – list Miami for the 3rd district. They also list the Dayton Public Library for the 3rd district. The 1878 list shows several other districts with more than one depository. The 1895 *Annual Report of the Public Printer* lists Dayton Public for the 3rd district and Miami for the 2nd district. All other districts by this time are listed as having only one depository designated by a representative. (There were also senatorial designations).

Although Miami may actually have been appointed to the 7th district in 1884, it was not assigned to the 7th district in any of the depository library lists. By 1895 and 1901, the 7th district is represented by the Warder Public Library (now Clark County Public Library). The designation date for Warder is also listed as 1884, the same year as Miami. In that year, Warder was located in the 8th congressional district. Depository libraries invariably ended up being listed for the district in which they were currently located, regardless of where they were originally appointed.

At this time the law allowed only one depository library to be designated by a representative in each district. Periodic redistricting led to confusion and Miami was made to pay the price. Although two libraries had been assigned to the 3rd district for many years, the Superintendent of Documents decided to take action in 1906. Librarian William McSurely wrote in his annual report to the Board of Trustees in 1906:

A few weeks ago we were informed by the Supt. of Documents, that he would cease to send the Government publications to us, as he could supply but one Depository in each Congressional district, and the Dayton library preceded ours in date of application. I at once wrote to the Congressman from this District asking him to intercede on our behalf. While many of these publications do us little or no good, yet many of them are very helpful to us, and we cannot well do without them.

Miami was no longer a depository library, but continued efforts to regain its status. Sherry Moeller reported how The Ohio State University was designated a depository in 1901 when a vacancy opened in the 2nd congressional district (located in Hamilton County, including part of Cincinnati). The representative at that time, Jacob Bromwell, was willing to appoint a depository library outside of his own district. In 1907, when land grant universities were made depositories, Ohio State became a depository as a land grant university. This re-opened the vacancy in the 2nd district. Miami was able to take advantage of this vacancy. The representative in 1909, Herman Goebel, was also willing to designate a depository library outside of his own district. Miami University was designated a depository for the third time, this time from the 2nd district. Miami's President reported in his annual report of 1909:

Since 1856 until about two years ago Miami University was, through its Library, the depository of public documents for this Congressional District. In 1907 we were deprived of this privilege that the Dayton Public Library might have it. Through the courtesy of Honorable Herman O. Goebel, Member of Congress from Hamilton County, Miami University has been made the depository for his District. I am sure you will be glad to vote our thanks to Judge Goebel for his courtesy in extending to our institution this privilege which is so indispensable to the usefulness of a college library (p.26).

In 1913 a law was passed that protected depository libraries from losing their status in such situations. As Government Printing Office Circular 22 on depository libraries summarized it:

The library can not be removed from the list after once having been designated as a depository, except when such library ceases to exist or voluntarily requests that it be dropped from the list. (Sec. 5, sundry civil act, approved June 23, 1913.)(p.2)

In keeping with migrating districts, Miami has been the depository library for the 8th congressional district since 1973. 1909 remains our official designation date, not reflecting the reality that Miami was a depository for much of the 19th century.

Centennial Display

The Government Information and Law Department Federal Depository Display focuses on Miami's history as a federal depository library, and includes highlights from a collection that began as early as the mid-1850s.

One of the highlights of the government collection at King Library is its selection of items from American wars. Ranging from a wide variety of materials, including posters, propagandistic pamphlets, books, government reports, and official declarations, these pieces not only reflect the thinking of the time, but provide primary sources to more fully illuminate our soldiers' experiences, the constraints of rationing, and the influence of immigration, war economics, and the new industry of defense on American's at home.



World War II Poster:
He's Watching You
Government Printing
Office, 1942

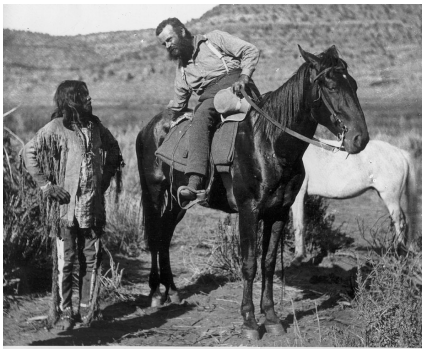


Photo of John Wesley Powell and
Native American by John K. Hillers

The exploration of the United States is an important topic within any government documents collection. From the introduction of European settlers in America, to their encounters and conflicts with established tribes, to the attempts of Lewis and Clark to bridge these worlds together, America offered a vast new landscape to exploit and harvest. A testament to the continuing work of exploration and investigation of the continent is John Wesley Powell's three-month river trip down the Green and Colorado rivers that included the first passage through the Grand Canyon. Powell retraced the route in 1871-1872 with another expedition, producing photographs (by John K. Hillers), an accurate map, and various papers, all of which were important contributions to the U.S. Geological Survey, a department which Powell later directed. Alongside Powell's work exploring the Colorado River Basin, Miami's collection includes

reports from Robert B. Stanton's later expedition to survey the feasibility of building a railroad through the canyons of Colorado. America's thirst for exploration continued through the modern era, with massive, century-long projects like the creation and eventual deaccession of the Panama Canal.

Government publications are not limited to printed books and maps. Since the inception of the Depository program, information has been distributed as three-dimensional objects, such as puzzles and board games, and as electronic documents appearing exclusively on CD's, DVD's, and online. King Library selects and preserves many of these non-traditional items in its collection.



<http://wechoosethemoon.org>

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