

# Alexandria Library Company Records MS002

Alexandria Library Company Records (MS002)

1794-2007



## Title Statement

Alexandria Library Company Records MS002

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## Publication Statement

**Publisher:** Local History and Special Collections Branch, Alexandria Library

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Business Number: 703-746-1791

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URL: <http://alexlibraryva.org/lhsc>



10/16/2018

## Profile Description

**Creation:** This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-11-05 12:01:41 +0000.

**Language Usage:** Description is written in: English, Latin script.

**Descriptive Rules:** Describing Archives: A Content Standard

## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

MS002

### Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/128

### Unit Date

1794-2007

### Computer Disks

AM01 (assort\_os\_box)

### Language

English

### Creator

Alexandria Library Company

### Creator

Alexandria Library Association (1897-1937)

### Creator

Alexandria Library Society (1937-1953)

**Extent**

8.10 Cubic Feet 13 boxes, 2 oversize boxes, 1 record carton

**Repository**

Local History and Special Collections Branch, Alexandria Library

## Administrative Information

**Processing Information**

A reprocessing project begun in 2018 incorporated several boxes of previously unprocessed materials dating from the 1960s to the 2000s, with the bulk dating from after 1980. They included many short, overlapping sequences of correspondence, lecture, meeting, and member records which were merged into continuations of established series including primarily correspondence and lectures but also meetings and member correspondence. The "subject files" were added to the existing miscellaneous series.

Several other changes were also made. A re-examination of the catalog, subscription, and circulation books was undertaken and most were renumbered, described, and relabeled based on primary source research. The 1794-1861 minute book that had been donated back in 1922 was also discovered misfiled in Ms 98 (which covers the library proper since 1937) and was returned to its original collection. Some letters found in minute books were moved to the correspondence series, and their original locations were bookmarked with acid free paper. Photocopies of catalogs were removed.

**Preferred Citation**

[Item], Alexandria Library Company Records, MS002, Alexandria Library, Local History and Special Collections, Alexandria, Virginia.

## Biographical / Historical

In the 1780s, a discussion group of Alexandria gentlemen called "The Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge" was formed. In 1794, many of these same individuals gathered to form the nucleus of the Alexandria Library Company (ALC). The ALC was a subscription library modelled after the Philadelphia Library Company, which had also emerged from such a club.

Society president Reverend John Muir became president of the ALC, a position he would hold for almost 20 years. Many of the library's founders are known to have been members of local Masonic lodges. Elisha Cullen Dick, who had succeeded George Washington as the leader of Lodge 22, was among the first directors of the ALC as well as the secretary of the earlier Society. The first Librarian was Edward Stabler, the proprietor of an apothecary shop. In 1796, Stabler was replaced by James Kennedy, who served as librarian until 1818. Overlaps and family links between the leadership of the library and other Alexandria institutions remained common over the next century and a half.

For a time, the Alexandria Lyceum (founded in 1838) and the ALC shared a physical space as well as similar missions. The Alexandria Lyceum was founded as part of a national movement focused on educational lectures. The union between the two organizations was dissolved in 1844, but the library continued to rent space from the Lyceum. The library was later said to have been in a state of "suspended animation" from around 1846 to 1852. In 1852, a "Young Men's" group took over under the original charter, publishing a new catalog in 1856. The library continued to operate into the Civil War. It remained in the Lyceum but not without acrimony, which is evident in the Alexandria Gazette in 1860.

In October 1867, an agreement was reached with what was variously referred to as the Alexandria Christian Association and the YMCA for assistance with running the library. The library separated from this organization during the early 1870s. By the second half of the 1870s, the library fell into a decline which the directors blamed on the lack of a published catalog.

The first library catalog had been prepared by Kennedy in 1796 and published sometime thereafter. The earliest catalog of which there is an extant copy was published in 1801, followed by another in 1808 of which there are few traces. A more enduring catalog was created in 1815. The 1830s saw publication of a supplement to the 1815 catalog and the creation of a working catalog that would be used into the late 1840s. Normal circulation records end in April 1861 when the library was converted into a military hospital. There are stray entries in May and December before operations resumed on a limited basis in May 1862 and continued at least through that year. Over a thousand volumes were lost during the war. Due to the decline in usage in the 1870s, a new catalog was produced by librarian Emma J. Young in 1872 but never published. After two years with Young's catalog, another was commissioned from Dr. Theo West, which also went unpublished. As a stopgap, handwritten copies were used by patrons. In 1898, a new catalog was created which utilized a decimal system for the first time. The last published catalog was a supplement to the 1912 version.

In the late 1870s, appeals were made to the men of Alexandria for support,. The directors met with another

"Young Men's Library Association" in 1878 without success, records of operations stop after January 1880.

The Gazette reported in January 1881 that the books were now in the custody of the school board, whose membership included William F. Carne, a former library company director and the son of one its former presidents. In May 1887 it reported that Carne, as leader of the board's library committee, was inviting associations wishing to participate in re-opening the library to a meeting at the Peabody school building where the books were held, and explained that he had always intended a reading room to be opened to the public once space was freed up for that purpose.

In June 1887, the Gazette reported that the "Reading Circle of Washington and Lee Schools" organized by teachers two years prior and the YMCA would operate the free library during the summer, in the hope that in September "an effort will be made, with a very fair prospect of success, to re-organize the Library Company." Gazette reports in 1890 and 1891 refer to continued efforts by Carne and others to "re-open" the library, and in 1892 being part of a "committee on the project for a free public library," but they did not succeed.

In the decades after 1870s librarianship not only professionalized but underwent a rapid gender shift, and apart from the periods in which there was no librarian for financial reasons, no male librarians seem to have been employed until well into the 20th century. Women's library organizations had become common nationally, and along with the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie played a major role in the growth of public libraries in America starting in the late 19th century.

In September 1897, the Alexandria Library Association led by Virginia Corse received custody of the books then in possession of the school board. With a modest donation from Carnegie, by 1898 the library was back in business, but as a subscription library, it would not become a free public library for almost 40 years. The new library needed a new librarian, and after one or two initial hires, the association found Alice Green (1865-1956), who would serve from 1902-1937 and in a lesser capacity into the mid-1940s. During this period, space for the library was rented from the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC).

The Depression brought financial hardship. As the crisis worsened in early 1931, the association had obtained \$1,000 from the city council to form "a nucleus for the establishment of a public library." Discussion of becoming a public library had been common since the 1920s, as the efforts of Carnegie and others had made them the norm nationally. Attempts were made to sell older books and hold fundraisers as subscription fees dried up. There was also a dispute with the UDC over a rent increase in 1933. The library was aided by the wealth of its members, including a \$5,000 bequest in 1935 from its long-time treasurer, Margaret L. Smoot.

Members built political support both on the council and among the public in the mid-1930s and in 1937 it was agreed that a building would be constructed on the site of the old cemetery of the Society of Friends and that the city government would cover annual expenses of no more than \$5,000 for the association to operate a free library. One member of the board would be appointed by the city. The new governing organization was rebranded the Alexandria Library Society. Agreements were signed in January, and the library opened at the Kate Waller Barrett Branch's current location, 717 Queen Street.

Another change after 1937 was the gender composition of the leadership. Men served on the board of the new Society and played prominent roles after 1937. After 1948 they typically occupied the presidency of the organization. Most elections were unanimous, often with women casting most of the votes, but it ceased to be a women's organization.

In 1945 a technicality in the Society's contract with the city was brought to the attention of the board. Namely that the \$5,000 the city was obligated to provide each year was not the minimum but rather the maximum contribution, and that the higher appropriations it had been making were illegal. The city took this as an opportunity to demand a contract change beyond the funding formula. Although the men of the city council had representation on the board, the women of the Society were still ultimately running the library, and the Society was asked to allow a majority of the executive board to be appointed by the city, and a minority by the Society. That the city legally "owned the building and all its contents" so long as it paid \$5,000 per year was also pointed out. The Alexandria Library Society signed the new contract, surrendering control of the library in November 1947. In its reduced role, the Society still elected members to the board and received reports from the librarian. It also retained independent funds that could be used for the benefit of the library. With the library now fully the city's responsibility, the membership was also able to more openly advocate for additional funding.

Another longstanding issue at the library was race. The president's 1928 annual report had endorsed becoming a "free city library," but feared that becoming a Carnegie library "would bring in some elements hitherto unknown and I think undesirable in our Library." In the 1930s the library association favored providing segregated facilities, but, after repeated meetings with the city council, failed to achieve even that modest goal. In the 13 March, 1939, minutes, the issue was revisited yet again, but without result.

Four days later on 17 March 1939, Sergeant George Wilson was turned down for a library card because of his race and Samuel Tucker filed a civil rights lawsuit against the librarian on his behalf. Plans for a segregated facility were dusted off, and new staff was hired so that the librarian could focus on the controversy. On 21 August 1939, several black men organized by Tucker entered the library and followed Wilson's example, but

after being refused, seated themselves in the library with books, beginning America's first library sit-in. It ended only after the city manager called the police, and all were arrested. The lawsuit was dismissed on technical grounds, but to prevent a new lawsuit the city approved the Robert H. Robinson branch, which opened in 1940. Tucker refused to accept a card there.

A major issue in the early 1950s was the push to expand the overcrowded main library serving the white community. The white librarian at the time, who had been hired in a junior capacity during Tucker's campaign in 1939, suggested to the Society that the expansion could be an opportunity to integrate. In the midst of the debates over expansion and additional funding, an opportunity emerged to purchase a neighboring building on the corner of North Columbus and Queen, which was later demolished. This prompted a discussion about the Alexandria Library Society's connection to the original library company. It was decided to change the name from the "Alexandria Library Society" to the "Alexandria Library Company," make the appropriate filings with the state government, and reinstate the 1799 charter, which would be revised by the legislature in the 1980s to help obtain tax-exempt status from the IRS.

This name change was completed at one of the company's most consequential meetings in February 1956. Every member was asked to sign their name in the minute book to signal their assent. A letter from a local civil rights activist questioning the legality of library segregation was also read, but deemed the province of the library board, which referred the matter back to the company whose reply is not preserved.

Member Mangum Weeks thereupon raised the question of the future role of the Library Company, and proposed resuming the tradition of annual lectures dating from the Lyceum period using funds from the newly instituted membership dues. This proposal was adopted, and preparing the annual lectures soon became a major focus of the Company. The Library Company continues to appoint members to the board of the Alexandria Library and hold its annual lecture series. It commissioned a new history of the library by William Seale in 2007, which can be found at the Local History and Special Collections Branch.

## Presidents and Librarians of the Library

Chronological listings for both presidents of the board and librarians up to the modern day.

## Content Description

The collection consists of circulation, subscription, and financial ledgers, annual lecture series documents, catalogues, correspondence, and various organizational documents. Topics include: foundation of the Alexandria Library Company, its cycles of growth and decline reflecting the local economy; the formation of the local public library system; and the on-going activities of the Alexandria Library Company, most notably its lecture series.

## Related Materials

The Alexandria Library Records (Ms 98) document the library as a separate institution from 1937 onward. It particularly complements this collection in its early decades through its administrative correspondence, board correspondence, minutes, annual reports, and organizational records, including contracts with the Alexandria Library Society.

The minutes of the library's executive board (1938-1947) are included in the microfilm version of the library minute books 1794-1947.

Transcripts of library company lectures 2-18 are available in the library.

Lecture series : [transcripts of the audiotapes made of the scholars invited to speak at these annual lectures]

## Keywords

Libraries -- Subscription Libraries

Public libraries.

Lectures and Lecturing

Associations, institutions, etc

Alexandria Library (Alexandria, Va.)

## Digital Materials

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# Description of Subordinate Components

## Series I: Organizational Records

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 1

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4893

**Unit Date** 1794-2002, bulk 1944-2002

**Language** English

### Scope and Contents

The organizational records series contains those records directly concerned with the library company and its predecessors as organizations. It covers charters, by-laws, contracts, the legal definition of the company, and its history. Charters and by-laws between 1794 and 1944 are generally documented in the minutes and or reprinted in catalogs or the Alexandria Gazette.

### Digital Materials

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

#### 1794 Charter (Photocopy)

**Unit ID** MS002-01-001

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4904

**Unit Date** 1971

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 001 (folder)

**Language** English

#### By-laws and Charter

**Unit ID** MS002-01-002

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4905

**Unit Date** 1944-2002

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 002 (folder)

**Language** English

### Digital Materials

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

#### Tax Exemption

**Unit ID** MS002-01-003

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4906

**Unit Date** 1979-1983

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 003 (folder)

**Language** English

#### 1937 Quaker Contract with the Library (copy)

**Unit ID** MS002-01-004

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4907

**Unit Date** Undated

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 004 (folder)

**Language** English

### Digital Materials

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

### **Addition to the Library**

**Unit ID** MS002-01-005

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4908

**Unit Date** 1952-1954

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 005 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Histories of the Library Company**

**Unit ID** MS002-01-006

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4909

**Unit Date** 1968 April

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 006 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Series II: General Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 2

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4894

**Unit Date** 1854-2002

**Language** English

#### **Scope and Contents**

The general correspondence series covers a long period of the history of the Library Company and its successors, with the bulk from the modern Library Company after 1954, when more documentation was being produced and captured in a systematic way.

From the earlier period, one folder covers the old Library Company, including an account of the Civil War and two folders cover the period of the Alexandria Library Association consisting primarily of correspondence with Andrew Carnegie about his financial support. The material from the Alexandria Library Society chiefly consists of copies of minutes. For library related inquiries after 1937 see the extensive public library correspondence in Ms 98.

The post-1954 correspondence includes lecture arrangements, nomination and member correspondence, announcements, and all manner of memoranda and external correspondence.

#### **Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

### **General Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002-01-007

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4910

**Unit Date** 1858-1878

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 007 (folder)

**Language** English

### **General Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002-01-008

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4911

**Unit Date** 1899-1900

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 008 (folder)

**Language** English

**General Correspondence****Unit ID** MS002-01-009**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4912**Unit Date** 1917 September 15**Text** 01 (box)**Container** 009 (folder)**Language** English**General Correspondence****Unit ID** MS002-01-010**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4913**Unit Date** 1945-1946**Text** 01 (box)**Container** 010 (folder)**Language** English**Digital Materials**[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)**General Correspondence****Unit ID** MS002-01-011**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4914**Unit Date** 1954-1969**Text** 01 (box)**Container** 011 (folder)**Language** English**Digital Materials**[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)**General Correspondence****Unit ID** MS002-01-012**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4915**Unit Date** 1970-1977**Text** 01 (box)**Container** 012 (folder)**Language** English**General Correspondence****Unit ID** MS002-01-013**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4916**Unit Date** 1978-1989**Text** 01 (box)**Container** 013 (folder)**Language** English**General Correspondence****Unit ID** MS002-01-014**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4917**Unit Date** 1990-1991**Text** 01 (box)**Container** 014 (folder)

**Language** English

**General Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002-01-015

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4918

**Unit Date** 1992-1994

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 015 (folder)

**Language** English

**General Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002-01-016

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4919

**Unit Date** 1995-2002

**Text** 01 (box)

**Container** 016 (folder)

**Language** English

**Series III: Financial Records**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 3

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4895

**Unit Date** 1915-2002

**Language** English

**Scope and Contents**

The financial reports series includes monthly financial reports from the Alexandria Library Association prior to the establishment of the public library and annual reports of the Library Company after 1953 along with a limited amount of additional correspondence on related issues.

There is also a file of annual reports which the Library Company was required to make to the state as a corporation.

For records relating to the Alexandria Library Company's efforts to become tax-exempt in the 1980s, see the Organizational Records series.

**Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

**Treasurer's Reports and Financial Records**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-017

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4920

**Unit Date** 1915-1920

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 017 (folder)

**Language** English

**Treasurer's Reports and Financial Records**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-018

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4921

**Unit Date** 1953-1961

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 018 (folder)

**Language** English

**Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

### **Treasurer's Reports and Financial Records**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-019

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4922

**Unit Date** 1965-1985

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 019 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Treasurer's Reports and Financial Records**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-020

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4923

**Unit Date** 1987-2002

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 020 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Annual Reports to the State Corporation Commission of Virginia**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-021

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4924

**Unit Date** 1970-1982

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 021 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Series IV: Meetings**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 4

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4896

**Unit Date** 1794-2003

**Language** English

#### **Scope and Contents**

The meetings series consists chiefly of bound and unbound minutes from the Alexandria Library Company and its successors.

The bound minutes cover the early Library Company from 1794 to its last meeting in 1879, the Alexandria Library Association and Library Society from 1897 through its loss of control of the library in the late 1947, and the Society and modern Library Company from 1948 to 1993.

After 1937, there are two minute books, one for the "executive board," which ran the library, and the other for the Library Society and later Library Company which appointed some of its members. The 1938-1947 executive board minutes are included in the microfilm copy of the older bound volumes, but the original is located in Ms 98.

Bylaws, agreements, financial, and membership information often appear in the records, as do records of elections. In some periods, annual reports are pasted into the minute books, which like a lot of library business, was printed in the Gazette.

The unbound meeting records cover the modern period of the Library Company and contain minutes, announcements of meetings, and notes, although for the earlier periods the minutes are merely photocopies of the bound volumes as indicated by page numbers.

#### **Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

### **Annual and Special Meetings, Minutes and Other Documents**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-022

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4925

**Unit Date** 1945-1960

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 022 (folder)

**Language** English

**Digital Materials**

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**Annual and Special Meetings, Minutes and Other Documents**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-023

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4926

**Unit Date** 1961-1977

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 023 (folder)

**Language** English

**Annual and Special Meetings, Minutes and Other Documents**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-024

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4927

**Unit Date** 1978-1987

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 024 (folder)

**Language** English

**Annual and Special Meetings, Minutes and Other Documents**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-025

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4928

**Unit Date** 1990-2003

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 025 (folder)

**Language** English

**Board of Director's Meetings, Minutes and Other Documents**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-026

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4929

**Unit Date** 1951 September 18

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 026 (folder)

**Language** English

**Digital Materials**

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**Board of Director's Meetings, Minutes and Other Documents**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-027

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4930

**Unit Date** 1991-2003

**Text** 02 (box)

**Container** 027 (folder)

**Language** English

**Meeting Minutes (Bound)**

**Unit ID** MS002-02-028

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5184

**Unit Date** 1794-1861

**Books** 02 (box)

**Container** 028 (folder)

**Microform** 00037 (reel)

**Language** English

**Microfilm Copy**

Reel 00037, beginning of the reel.

**Filming**

Volume ended up with the Leadbeater family in the 1860s but was donated back in 1922. Was moved at one point in Collection 98 (Library Records after 1937) but was moved back to the Library Company Records in 2018.

Filmed 5/1/1969 "Alexandria Library Minute Books - 6 Vols" University of Virginia Library Photographic Service

**Original**

Ms 2-2

**Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

**Meeting Minutes (Bound)**

**Unit ID** MS002-03-029

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4931

**Unit Date** 1868-1879

**Books** 03 (box)

**Container** 029 (folder)

**Microform** 00037 (reel)

**Language** English

**Microfilm Copy**

Reel 00037, filmed after 1911-1930 volume but before the Executive minutes of 1938-1947.

**Filming**

Filmed 5/1/1969 "Alexandria Library Minute Books - 6 Vols" University of Virginia Library Photographic Service

**Existence and Location of Originals**

Ms 2-3

**Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

**Meeting Minutes (Bound)**

**Unit ID** MS002-03-030

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4932

**Unit Date** 1897-1911

**Books** 03 (box)

**Container** 030 (folder)

**Microform** 00037 (reel)

**Language** English

**Microfilm Copy**

Reel 00037 after 1794-1861 volume.

**Filming**

Filmed 5/1/1969 "Alexandria Library Minute Books - 6 Vols" University of Virginia Library Photographic Service

### **Existence and Location of Originals**

Ms 2-3

### **Digital Materials**

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### **Meeting Minutes (Bound)**

**Unit ID** MS002-03-031

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4933

**Unit Date** 1911-1930

**Books** 03 (box)

**Container** 031 (folder)

**Microform** 00037 (reel)

**Language** English

### **Microfilm Copy**

Reel 00037, following 1897-1911 volume.

### **Filming**

Filmed 5/1/1969 "Alexandria Library Minute Books - 6 Vols" University of Virginia Library Photographic Service

### **Existence and Location of Originals**

Ms 2-3

### **Digital Materials**

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### **Meeting Minutes (Bound)**

**Unit ID** MS002-03-032

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4934

**Unit Date** 1931-1947

**Books** 03 (box)

**Container** 032 (folder)

**Microform** 00037 (reel)

**Language** English

### **Microfilm Copies**

Reel 00037 filmed after 1868-1879 minutes but before the 1938-1947 executive board minutes.

### **Filming**

Filmed 5/1/1969 "Alexandria Library Minute Books - 6 Vols" University of Virginia Library Photographic Service

### **Existence and Location of Originals**

Ms 2-3

### **Executive Board Minute Book**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5150

**Unit Date** 1938-1947

**Microform** 00037 (reel)

**Language** English

### **Filming**

Filmed 5/1/1969 "Alexandria Library Minute Books - 6 Vols" University of Virginia Library Photographic Service

### **Existence and Location of Originals**

Box 98-2 Folder 16

**Meeting Minutes (Bound)**

**Unit ID** MS002-03-033

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5059

**Unit Date** 1948-1993

**Books** 03 (box)

**Container** 033 (folder)

**Language** English

**Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

**Series V: Member Records**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 5

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4897

**Unit Date** 1942-1971

**Language** English

**Scope and Contents**

The members series contains records relating to the selection, participation, and retention of members of the Library Company, with a focus on the modern period from the 1950s onward. It includes records of the nominating committee, correspondence with and about current or prospective members, and lists of members and guests attending the annual lectures. One of these lists is also available on a 3½ inch disk.

**Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

**Nominating Committee Reports**

**Unit ID** MS002-04-034

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4935

**Unit Date** 1967-2002

**Text** 04 (box)

**Container** 034 (folder)

**Language** English

**Biographical Information on Current and Prospective Members**

**Unit ID** MS002-04-035

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4936

**Unit Date** 1954-1964

**Text** 04 (box)

**Container** 035 (folder)

**Language** English

**Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

**Members Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002-04-036

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4937

**Unit Date** 1941-1978

**Text** 04 (box)

**Container** 036 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Members Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002-04-037

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4938

**Unit Date** 1990-2002

**Text** 04 (box)

**Container** 037 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Member Rosters**

**Unit ID** MS002-04-038

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4939

**Unit Date** 1942-1992

**Text** 04 (box)

**Container** 038 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

### **Bicentennial Guest Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-04-039

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4940

**Unit Date** 1994

**Books** 04 (box)

**Container** 039 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Member Rosters**

**Unit ID** MS002-04-040

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4941

**Unit Date** 2000-2001

**Text** 04 (box)

**Container** 040 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Corrected Guest List (word perfect 60) [3 1/2 Inch Floppy]**

**Unit ID** MS002-AM01-132

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4942

**Unit Date** 2000 February 23

**Computer Disks** AM01 (assort\_os\_box)

**Container** 132 (object)

**Language** English

### **Series VI: Subscription Records**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 6

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4898

**Unit Date** 1794-1879

**Language** English

### **Historical Note**

The initial combination of financial and subscription records likely reflected the company's initial dependence on subscription fees, in contrast to the later subscription library in the city that relied more on donors. This recordkeeping system appears to have been a casualty of the merger with the Lyceum, which became official in early 1840.

As the physical volume in use at that time was still mostly blank, it was repeatedly repurposed, first for additional circulation records (until these too lapsed) and later for a "list of Stockholders and the amount due from each for the year commencing the 13th February 1854," which likely relates to the revitalization of the company after its agreement with the Young Men's group. The agreement required the men to find 100 subscribers, and the list was likely prepared for the annual meeting originally scheduled for 20 February (a week after the date on the list), at which it was decided to void the shares of individuals who had not paid.

### **Scope and Contents**

The subscription series consists of bound volumes of records documenting the subscribers of the company while doubling as ledgers for many of the financial transactions of the pre-Lyceum period (1794-1839), with gaps between volumes. Apart from the minutes, the volumes contain the only information on the subscribers of the late 1790s, for which there is a gap in the circulation records.

There are also additional financial records from 1826-1839 and a list of subscribers, paid and not, from 1854. These appear in the same volume (see historical note), along with the circulation records for 1846-1848 in between.

The stubs of printed subscription certificates from 1874-1879 are also included in this series. Each contains an identifying number, the name of a subscriber, and a dollar amount, accompanied in some cases by dates or other notations. A few of the completed patron slips are also in this volume, including dates and the signature of the treasurer.

### **Digital Materials**

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### **Arrangement**

The accounting records in the subscription books shifted back and forth between two systems, one listing transactions chronologically and the other listing them under the names of individuals.

With the exception of the 1826-1854 book, all entries are characterized by double-entry bookkeeping, with the left side page documenting money going out ("to"), and the right hand page documenting money coming in ("by"), this can be confusing as bills for subscriptions seem at times to have been listed in the outgoing section.

Most of the books begin with indexes of numbered names in no clear order. The same numbers appear in columns toward the right of the accounts pages, just before the amounts, apparently signifying people and groups with which the transactions were undertaken. These numbers should not be confused with the columns on the left indicating the calendar day. They were dropped around 1826.

Payments under the names of individuals appear in the first part of the 1794-1799 volume, the latter parts of the 1799-1809 and 1809-1819 volumes, and throughout the bulk of the two volumes covering 1820-1828.

### **Subscription Books and Ledgers**

**Unit ID** MS002-05-041

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4943

**Unit Date** 1794-1799

**Books** 05 (box)

**Container** 041 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Subscription Books and Ledgers**

**Unit ID** MS002-05-042

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4944

**Unit Date** 1799-1809

**Books** 05 (box)

**Container** 042 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Digital Materials**

[Click to view digital materials in this collection](#)

### **Subscription Books and Ledgers**

**Unit ID** MS002-05-043

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4945

**Unit Date** 1809-1819

**Books** 05 (box)

**Container** 043 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Subscription Books and Ledgers**

**Unit ID** MS002-05-044

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4946

**Unit Date** 1820-1826

**Books** 05 (box)

**Container** 044 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Subscription Books and Ledgers**

**Unit ID** MS002-05-045

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4947

**Unit Date** 1826-1828

**Books** 05 (box)

**Container** 045 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Subscription Stubs**

**Unit ID** MS002-06-046

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4949

**Unit Date** 1874-1879

**Books** 06 (box)

**Container** 046 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Subscription and Circulation Ledger**

**Unit ID** MS002-06-047

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4948

**Unit Date** 1826-1854

**Unit Date** 1826-1848

**Books** 06 (box)

**Container** 047 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Series VII: Annual Lecture**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 7

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4899

**Unit Date** 1860, 1957-2006

**Language** English

### **Processing Information**

Records concerning individual lectures, such as programs and invitations, were foldered by individual lecture unless part of a separate series. This permitted the titles of lectures and names of lecturers to be better indexed and gaps in documentation to be made more obvious than would have been the case with separate subseries for programs, transcripts, etc.

### **Biographical / Historical**

The 1880 lecture of Dr. William Dudley on "Captain Gordon and the Raid on Alexandria 1814" was recorded

The 1960 lecture of Dr. William Dudley on "Captain Gordon and the Raid on Alexandria 1614" was recorded but was left off the lists of annual lectures printed in later years. It marks the point at which the sequential numbering of annual lectures was stopped. The reason for this is unknown.

### **Scope and Contents**

This series contains information on the annual lecture series, with the bulk covering the period after its revival in 1957. The files for the early years include much of the correspondence arranging for the lectures and information on the lecturers as well as in some cases printed copies of the prepared text. For later years the files consist largely of lecture announcements, programs, and attendance lists.

Audio or video recordings were made of most lectures, but are not currently available. Correspondence relating to the recordings can be found in the relevant subseries.

Correspondence is also available regarding the production of the printed programs and the selection of speakers during the 1970s along with an undated seat plan.

Information on attendance and the financial aspects of the lectures can be found in other series.

Print transcriptions for certain lectures are available in the reading room.

### **Arrangement**

Arrangement is by year of lecture under its title and orator apart from the seat plan and correspondence on administrative issues. Those are arranged chronologically. Lectures in the modern series were assigned numbers by the Library Company until 1980.

#### **"The Decoration of the Capital," Professor B. Hallowell**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-048

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4969

**Unit Date** 1860

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 048 (folder)

**Language** English

#### **"Jefferson, Then and Now," Dumas Malone**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-049

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4970

**Unit Date** 1957

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 049 (folder)

**Language** English

#### **"Robert E. Lee: A Figure for Drama," Paul Green**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-050

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4971

**Unit Date** 1958

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 050 (folder)

**Language** English

#### **"William Bartram and Southern Natural History," Francis Harper**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-051

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4972

**Unit Date** 1959

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 051 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Westward Ho!" Katherine Anne Porter**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-052

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4973

**Unit Date** 1960

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 052 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The Growth of Southern Literature," Clifton Waller Barrett**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-053

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4974

**Unit Date** 1961

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 053 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The Social Contribution of the Virginia Aristocracy in the Colonial Period," Lewis Wright**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-054

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4975

**Unit Date** 1962

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 054 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Thomas Jefferson and the World of Today," John Dos Passos**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-055

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4976

**Unit Date** 1963

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 055 (folder)

**Language** English

**"A Fiction Writer Faces Facts," Nancy Hale**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-056

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4977

**Unit Date** 1964

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 056 (folder)

**Language** English

**"How Virginia Came to Accept the Constitution of the United States," David J. Mays**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-057

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4978

**Unit Date** 1965

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 057 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Notes on the Music in the South Before 1800," Richard Bales**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-058

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4979

**Unit Date** 1966

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 058 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Poetae Meridionales: Very If Very Few," Dr. Allan Tate**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-059

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4980

**Unit Date** 1967

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 059 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Meet Mr. Wirt: An Interim Report on a Quest for a Live Book About Dead People," Dr. Joseph C. Robert**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-060

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4981

**Unit Date** 1968

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 060 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Virginia and the Road to Independence," Joseph P. Cullen**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-061

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4982

**Unit Date** 1969

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 061 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The Smithsonian in the New Decade," S. Dillon Ripley**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-062

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4983

**Unit Date** 1970

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 062 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Masterpieces of Americana in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, Department of State"  
Clement E. Conger**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-063

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4984

**Unit Date** 1971

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 063 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Lee and Jackson: Model partners," Dr. Frank Vandiver**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-064

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4985

**Unit Date** 1972

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 064 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The Spirit of the South in the Great Southern Novels," Rev. Joseph T. Durkin**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-065

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4986

**Unit Date** 1973

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 065 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Prelude to Yorktown: The Revolution in the Carolinas," Dr. Charles E. Lee**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-066

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4987

**Unit Date** 1974

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 066 (folder)

**Language** English

**"George Washington," James Thomas Flexner**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-067

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4988

**Unit Date** 1975

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 067 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Ideology and Politics in the American Revolution," David K. Fieldhouse**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-068

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4989

**Unit Date** 1976

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 068 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Virginia Progenitors," Milton Rubicam**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-069

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4990

**Unit Date** 1977

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 069 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Getting Ready for the Challenge of the 1980s," Guy Fridell**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-070

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4991

**Unit Date** 1978

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 070 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Four Fiery Women," Brendan Gill**

**Unit ID** MS002-07-071

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4992

**Unit Date** 1979

**Text** 07 (box)

**Container** 071 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The Gospel According to St. Andrew: Andrew Jackson," Robert V. Remini**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-072

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4993

**Unit Date** 1981

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 072 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Stamp Act and Aftermath: The Crisis of the Old Order in Virginia," Thad W. Tate**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-073

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4994

**Unit Date** 1982

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 073 (folder)

**Language** English

**"A Book-Reading President: The Exemplary James Madison," Dr. Robert Allen Rutland**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-074

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4995

**Unit Date** 1983

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 074 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Thomas Jefferson and John Adams: The Best of Two Worlds," Wendell Garrett**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-075

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4996

**Unit Date** 1984

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 075 (folder)

**Language** English

**"William Faulkner as a Southern Humorist," M. Thomas Inge**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-076

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4997

**Unit Date** 1985

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 076 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The South - Observations on Time and Place," Dr. Ernest Connally**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-077

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4998

**Unit Date** 1986

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 077 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The G.I.'s South: the North-South Dialogue During World War II," Dr. Morton Sosna**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-078

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4999

**Unit Date** 1987

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 078 (folder)

**Language** English

**"My South - Then and Now," William C. Havard**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-079

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5000

**Unit Date** 1988

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 079 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Under a Southern Rose: Of a Time When 'CIA' Meant 'Confederate Intelligence Activities'," David Winfrey Gaddy**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-080

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5001

**Unit Date** 1989

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 080 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Tales of a Traveler: A Georgian Visits Washington in 1830," Robert Manson Myers**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-081

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5002

**Unit Date** 1992

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 081 (folder)

**Language** English

**"John Wilkes Boothe and Lady Love," Dr. Terry Alford**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-082

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5003

**Unit Date** 1993

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 082 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Readin', Writin' on the Road from Richmond," Roger Mudd**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-083

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5004

**Unit Date** 1994

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 083 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Why the Civil War Still Lives, and How It Speaks to Us Today," Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-084

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5005

**Unit Date** 1995

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 084 (folder)

**Language** English

**"The Lafayettes' Second Revolution," William Seale**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-085

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5006

**Unit Date** 1996

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 085 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Faulkner, Race and the South: A Study in Paradox," Edwin Yoder, Jr.**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-086

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5007

**Unit Date** 1997

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 086 (folder)

**Language** English

**"George Washington - The Man We Don't Know" Richard Brookhiser**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-087

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5008

**Unit Date** 1998

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 087 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Thomas Jefferson: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" Daniel P. Jordan**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-088

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5009

**Unit Date** 1999

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 088 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Martha Washington, 'The First First Lady,' " Sarah Booth Conroy**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-089

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5010

**Unit Date** 2001-03

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 089 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Scandal on the Plantation," Alan Pell Crawford**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-090

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5011

**Unit Date** 2002 March

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 090 (folder)

**Language** English

**"Memory and Sense of Place in the American South" Dr. William R. Ferris**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-091

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5012

**Unit Date** 2006 March 26

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 091 (folder)

**Language** English

**Plan of Seating for the Alexandria Lecture Series**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-092

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5013

**Unit Date** Undated

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 092 (folder)

**Language** English

**Printing Correspondence**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-093

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5014

**Unit Date** 1993-1996

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 093 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Suggested Topics and Speakers**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-094

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5015

**Unit Date** 1972-1976

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 094 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Tape Contracts**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-095

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5016

**Unit Date** 1975-1984

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 095 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Notes on Audio Recordings**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-096

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5017

**Unit Date** 1974-1982

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 096 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Series VIII: Miscellaneous**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 8

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4900

**Unit Date** 1864, 1954-1982

**Language** English

#### **Scope and Contents**

The collection's miscellany includes annual reports of the library, a survey of the old library company books, seals, stationary, and printed matter including poems, fundraising pamphlets, and literature about the library from the League of Women Voters.

#### **1799 Stabler Seal**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-097

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5018

**Unit Date** 1864 October 13

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 097 (folder)

**Language** English

#### **Printed Matter**

**Unit ID** MS002-08-098

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5019

**Unit Date** 1954-1968

**Text** 08 (box)

**Container** 098 (folder)

**Language** English

**Annual Reports of the Alexandria Library****Unit ID** MS002-08-099**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5020**Unit Date** 1967-1982**Text** 08 (box)**Container** 099 (folder)**Language** English**Comments on the Books in the Alexandria Library****Unit ID** MS002-08-100**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5021**Unit Date** 1971 April 1**Text** 08 (box)**Container** 100 (folder)**Language** English**Stationary****Unit ID** MS002-08-101**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5022**Unit Date** Undated**Text** 08 (box)**Container** 101 (folder)**Language** English**Series IX: News Clippings****Unit ID** MS002 Series 9**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4901**Unit Date** 1860, 1956-1976**Language** English**Scope and Contents**

The news clippings series consists chiefly of articles about the annual lectures or which report on the annual meetings and the election of officers and members.

**Clippings****Unit ID** MS002-08-102**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5023**Unit Date** 1860**Text** 08 (box)**Container** 102 (folder)**Language** English**Clippings****Unit ID** MS002-08-103**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5024**Unit Date** 1956-1976**Text** 08 (box)**Container** 103 (folder)**Language** English

## **Series X: Catalogs**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 10

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4902

**Unit Date** 1801-1912

**Language** English

### **Historical Note**

No catalog was published under the first librarian, but four were published during the 1796-1818 tenure of his successor.

On 29 December 1796 he was directed to prepare a catalog of books "classed according to their size and arranged in the order of the alphabet, with the number and cost or value of each," although a March 1797 entry suggests that it was still not complete four months later. No copy of this catalog has survived, but there would have been between 200 and 400 titles at that time.

The growth of the collection was driven in part by the acceptance of books in place of subscription fees and the purchase of private libraries. In May 1800 a committee was formed to examine its acquisitions for books that were "useless, superfluous or of immoral tendency," which decided in September to postpone acting on them until it was time to print a new catalog. That time came on 2 November 1801 when a committee was appointed to assist the librarian in creating a new catalog.

On 1 February 1808 the board decided to print a new catalog at 50 cents a copy because "many members were without any." On 2 May this catalog was reported to be largely complete. Another meeting was planned shortly thereafter so that it could be printed "without delay." That meeting is undocumented, if indeed it took place. No copy of this catalog or any direct record of its publication is currently known. But it must have existed since it was referenced in a later circulation book and the librarian received a bonus for his work on it in March 1809.

On 2 May 1814, it was decided to create another new catalog. It would eventually have 1,027 numbers, which circulation records show the library had reached by July 1814. On 14 November 1814, the librarian reported the catalog "ready for the press." He was instructed to obtain 150 copies "with all convenient dispatch," a number raised to 200 the following month. In February 1815, he reported the catalog "about half-finished" and presented a copy to the board, which set a price of 50 cents. In March he received compensation for "his additional trouble in preparing the new catalogue for the press," suggesting that the printing had been completed.

The 1815 catalog was later extended by a published supplement that added additional numbers. Unlike other printed works, there is no mention of when the supplement was produced in the minutes. It is, however, clear from circulation records that all its books had circulated by 14 August 1830. According to the minutes, a meeting had been called for 10 May 1830 only to be quickly adjourned "there appearing no business requiring the attention of the board," and quarterly meetings on 2 August and 2 November were adjourned, lacking a quorum. The librarian at the time had replaced his predecessor in October 1829 and been confirmed in the position the following March. It seems plausible that he pushed to update the catalog after becoming librarian but that the question was either not deemed important or could not be addressed due to the lack of quorum but that it was printed in 1830 anyway.

At the same time, a working catalog was created for use in the library itself. It is the earliest preserved catalog of this type but was probably not the first. It contains a relisting of the contents of the 1815 catalog and supplement sorted by the first letter of the alphabet with pamphlets listed separately as well as books added between April 1833 and the suspension of library operations after 1848 listed by subject. Although its initial form was compiled some time earlier, it does not appear to have come into use until sometime after 1834 where there is a gap in the circulation records. The first 1,725 entries may have been added at the time of the 1815 supplement with the shift to a new method of arrangement occurring later.

On 8 March 1856 a committee of the revived library company was assigned to rearrange and renumber the books for publication. On 29 November 1856, the board voted for 300 copies of the finished catalog to be produced.

On 18 June 1858 board president Andrew Jamison resigned. On 4 September Richard L. Carne, the chairman of the committee on the catalog and president pro-tem submitted "his amendment to the catalog" and appointed Sylvester Scott as librarian to constitute a "committee of revisal." A new working catalog is preserved from this period continuing into the Civil War, although it does not appear to have been published.

From the reestablishment of the library in the late 1860s to its failure at the close of the 1870s the lack of a published catalog to advertise the available books was identified as a major issue. The last version of the catalog prior to the Civil War had contained over 5,000 books, of which it was estimated in 1871 that 1,000-1,500 had been lost.

Circulations records from the early 1870s feature book numbers around 1,000 that do not correspond to

any known listing, and numbers were abandoned entirely from May 1871 to January 1872. It was decided on 2 October 1872 to create a new catalog, and the task was assigned to the new librarian, Emma Young. The fact that the numbers of the circulating books changed to include some with numbers over 5,000 after 4 December 1872 indicates that this work was completed, but it was never published and there is no surviving catalog from that period.

The limited use of the catalog is evident from the prevalence of high numbered works among those in circulation. The highest numbers indicated recent acquisitions, which often received announcements in the Alexandria Gazette.

At the 20 February 1874 meeting, it was noted that "the last catalogue was published some years previous to the war and had become, by reasons of subsequent losses and additions, very incomplete" and the board decided to appoint Dr. Theo West "to catalogue and arrange the books." They planned to print the catalog in time for the 1875 annual meeting, but printing was postponed indefinitely.

The new catalog went into effect on 10 July 1874 as seen in the shift in circulation records from a system with numbers up to around 5,800 to a new catalog going to 4,314, but again they were unable to publish it. Seven months later at the 19 February 1875 meeting, it was decided to arrange a printing "as soon as possible," but this did not occur either.

On 10 March 1876 the board decided upon a different plan. The catalog was to be divided among the directors so that copies might be made "for the librarian's desk." The published account of the 21 February 1877 annual meeting noted that "many persons have given as a reason for not becoming subscribers the inaccessibility of the old library which was not catalogued. This plea no longer holds." Doctor West's catalog "copied by members of the Board without expense, bound in good style, can now always be found on the Librarian's desk." Operations ceased and the books went into storage a few years later.

At the 8 January 1898 meeting of the newly formed Alexandria Library Association, it was moved that the "the catalogue be printed at once" with the addition of blank pages between the leaves for advertisements from city merchants.

This catalog was the first to use a version of the Dewey Decimal System, which had become popular since its first publication in 1888, reaching its 5th edition in 1894. This was the first modern classification system in the history of the Alexandria Library.

Subsequent to the publication of the 1898 catalog in January of that year, there are several mentions of publishing "supplements" such as on 11 April 1899 and 11 July 1899 which may refer to the practice of publishing notices with the titles of new additions in the Alexandria Gazette, such as those of 6 July and 13 July 1899.

On 1 January 1902 there was a push for a "supplementary catalogue (being a catalogue of books up to date) be printed" and the president appointed a committee for that purpose. It was postponed pending the catalog's completion. On 9 October 1906 the board voted to accept an offer from a Mr. White to print 1000 copies in return for advertising space. According to the 8 January 1907 minutes, the library was given half the copies of the 1906 catalog for free, of which it sold 200 and gave 300 away.

The 12 April 1910 minutes mention a decision to "again postpone the publication a supplementary catalogue." On 23 January 1912 it was again put off until the 9 April meeting, where it was decided for a new catalog to be printed and priced at five cents a copy and "to have the names of the old magazines put into the new catalogue but not into the card catalogue." On 12 June 1912 it was reported that "the catalogue was in the hands of the printer and that Mrs. Monroe was reading the proof" and the "new catalog" was deemed "ready for distribution" on 8 October 1912.

The annual report at that same meeting noted that "the year has also seen the completion of the labelling, classifying, and cataloguing of all the old and valuable magazines which the Board has for so long a time desired to put into shape for distribution," which a review of the supplement suggests meant works in good condition available for circulation.

On 11 April 1933 Mrs. Newell "volunteered to catalogue old magazines in order that their value may be ascertained." On 9 May 1933 she presented a "typewritten list" of "old magazines" for appraisal as part of their depression era fundraising efforts. On 10 October she reported them to be of "no value" and suggested having them sent to the Salvation Army for use as old paper. On 8 January 1934 the board approved this proposal for those magazines of "no value," which do not appear to have included many titles listed in this catalog.

No explicit reason for the abandonment of published catalogs after 1912 was given, but the allusion to card catalogs suggests that it was a final step in the transition from numerical catalogs, which favored bound volumes by allowing new titles to be added to the end of the sequence, to the Dewey Decimal System, which required new titles to be inserted in the correct place in the existing list and was more easily managed with cards which did not require leaving space for new titles as the 1876 catalog had.

## **Scope and Contents**

The catalogs provide listings of books showing what was available at the library during different time periods and identifying books for some parts of the circulation records. Catalogs also frequently included information on other topics, including the rules of the library, founding documents, library histories, and the value of the books.

Titles were often abbreviated, especially in the working catalogs, and dates of publication were often lacking. This can make identifying a work from the catalog difficult even when copies of it are extant elsewhere.

Catalogs can be used reliably for most of the numerical listings in the circulation records for roughly 1801-1807, 1815-1848, 1856-1862, and 1874-1879. The 1815 catalog was not only bigger than the 1801, but had been renumbered. Because of this practice, the 1801 catalog cannot be relied upon for records prior to its implementation nor after the point in 1807-1808 when its successor went into effect. Since there is no way to know if the 1815 catalog was an extension of the 1808, it likewise cannot be trusted prior to implementation. The 1815 and its supplement were used for a longer period and the 1830-1848 used it as a base, although it altered its system of arrangement leaving around 30 or so numbers undefined for part of the 1830s. The 1856 printed and 1858-1860 working catalogs cover much of the same material and are usable for records into the Civil War. The 1856 is available online in a searchable format and organized to be browsed, while the working catalog is arranged by number. The 1876 copy of the catalog implemented in July 1874 is missing the letters O-P, but is otherwise usable for the last few years of circulation records.

See specific catalog notes for details.

### **Arrangement**

The printed 1801 and 1815 catalogs were arranged by subject and size, with the 1815 supplement seemingly arranged in accession order.

The 1856 printed catalog was arranged alphabetically by author or title.

Working catalogs are arranged by number, except that the 1830-1848 switched to a subject system sometime after 1834 and the 1876 is arranged alphabetically.

Catalogs from 1898 on use a version of the Dewey Decimal System. The old magazines are arranged by title.

See individual arrangement notes for details.

## **Catalogue of the Alexandria Library Company**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5136

**Unit Date** 1801

**Microform** 00038 (reel)

**Language** English

### **Scope and Contents**

The 1801 catalog corresponds to the title numbers 1-452 in the circulations records from around 1802-1808 and offers the number of volumes and value for each. It is hard to be precise since the dates on which it came into and fell out of use at the library are unknown. The fact that books were removed as well as added at the time of its adoption and its organization suggest that it may not be reliable for the 1794-1796 circulation records, and possibly not even for books circulating earlier in 1801 which were likely identified by an earlier catalog.

In addition to a listing of books, the catalog includes the revised act of incorporation dated September 1799, the laws of the company passed on 2 November 1801 and an alphabetical membership list. At the back is a list of book donations from largest to smallest, including the name of the donor, the total number of volumes donated, and a list of title numbers, along with an index to the catalog and some errata.

It was printed by Cottom and Stewart in Alexandria and sold for fifty cents a copy.

### **Arrangement**

Civil History, Voyages and Travels, Biography, Antiquities, Geography, and Maps etc. (p.13) Folios (1-9) Quartos (10-24) Octavos (25-109) Duodecima and Infra (110-151) Ecclesiastical History, Theology, Didactic Pieces, Moral Philosophy, and Metaphysics (p.29) Folios (152-154) Quartos (155-156) Octavos (157-188) Duodecima and Infra (189-218) Arts and Sciences, Natural History, Natural Philosophy, and Miscellaneous Literature (p. 35) Folios (219-222) Quartos (223-225) Octavos (226-266) Duodecima and Infra (267-293) Law, Politics, Political Economy, Agriculture, Commerce, etc. (p.42) Folios (294-295) Quartos (296) Octavos (297-326) Duodecima and Infra (327-338) Poetry, Plays, Belles Lettres, and Criticism etc. (p.47) Octavos (339-353) Duodecima and Infra (354-385) Novels and Romances (p.52) Octavos (386) Duodecimas and Infra (387-427) Appendix and Supplementary (428-452) (p.54)

## **Catalogue of the Alexandria Library Company**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5137

**Unit Date** 1815

**Microform** 00039 (reel)

**Language** English

### **Scope and Contents**

This catalog of 1,027 titles includes the title number, number of volumes, and price, as well as a note to indicate whether something was a donation. It is a reliable reference for the decades that followed, but should be used with caution for earlier periods. Comparison with the 1801 catalog shows that titles were inserted with very low numbers, and it is unclear how the 1808 catalog was organized. Given the way the catalog was divided, there is no clear method by which accretions could have been added to the working catalog other than accession order, whereas the 1815 catalog required them to be categorized.

It is therefore logical to assume that numbers added in between catalog issuances were later changed, and that the 1815 catalog is probably not valid for the preceding period.

The full title of the catalog included the phrase "to which are prefixed, the Act of Incorporation; the Laws of the Company, and the Names of the Members," but our copy contains only pages 11-46 and does not contain front matter. It is unclear whether the first ten pages were removed, or John A. Stewart's edition was simply printed without them.

### **Existence and Location of Copies**

In 1967, Marjorie Darnell Evans completed a multi-year thesis project for Catholic University of America publishing a reorganized 1815 catalog in alphabetical order by author, and a typed copy of the original as an appendix, of which photocopies also exist.

### **Custodial History**

A microfilm reproduction of a copy from the Library of Congress with an 1876 stamp donated as a gift of Mr. Allen Reese 3/1/49.

### **Arrangement**

The 1,027 titles were assigned numbers according to the following classification system based on size and subject. The title counts are taken from Evans, 1967.

Miscellaneous Folios (21 titles) Miscellaneous Quarto (33 titles) Civil History, Voyages and Travels, Geography, Antiquities, Biography, etc. Octavos (223 titles) Duodecima and Infra (95 titles) Ecclesiastical History, Theology, Essays Moral and Religious, Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics etc. Octavos (54 titles) Duodecima and Infra (47 titles) Miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_ General Science, The Arts, Domestic Economy, Natural Philosophy, Periodical Essays, Magazines and Reviews, etc. Octavo (72 titles) Duodecima and Infra (43 titles) Law, Politics, Political Economy, Agriculture, Commerce, etc. Octavo (60 titles) Duodecima and Infra (13 titles) Poetry, the Drama, Belles Lettres, and Criticism Octavo (39 titles) Duodecima and Infra (13 titles) Novels and Romances etc. (130 titles) Appendix-Supplementary and Miscellaneous (30 titles)

### **Supplement to the 1815 Catalog**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5025

**Unit Date** 1830

**Microform** 00039 (reel)

**Language** English

## Processing Information

There is no mention of when the supplement was produced in the minutes, which is odd for a printed pamphlet. As a result dating was attempted starting from the circulation records, which showed the #1,728 was first checked out on 14 August 1830. According to the minutes, a meeting had been called for 10 May 1830, only to be quickly adjourned "there appearing no business requiring the attention of the board," and quarterly meetings on 2 August and 2 November adjourned for lack of a quorum. The librarian at the time, George Drinker, had replaced his predecessor in October 1829 and been confirmed in the position in March, so the working hypothesis is that he pushed to update the catalog after becoming librarian but the question was either not deemed important or could not be addressed due to the lack of a quorum and that it was printing anyway sometime in 1830. That date may need to be updated in light of additional evidence in the future (e.g. the Gazette becoming searchable for the 1830s).

The location of the original is unknown despite Library of Congress Classification number noted by a previous processor resembling that of the original 1815 catalog.

The collection originally contained a photocopy which was removed. I had the image of a staple, suggesting it was a copy of a copy. It was not correctly dated. A modern processor had written "NOT used. The # sequence would conflict with 1815 catalogue compiled by Evans" in reference to the effort to reconstruct the 1815 arrangement made by Marjorie Darnell Evans, possibly the only record that the individual had access to, and added an "1815" date in pen. This is all the more perplexing as another hand had also added a "1" before the first number to highlight the fact that the numbers were higher than the 1815 catalog, a fact that tendency to list only the last two digits otherwise obscured.

## Scope and Contents

This printed catalog supplement extends the 1815 catalog from #1,027 to #1,728 updating it to August 1830. It was likely published around that time by William Greer, printer, and matches the titles. It matches the numbers of a listing of books dated 1828 in one of the circulation books suggesting that no rearrangement of newer books occurred prior to publication.

The supplement has most of the same information as the 1815, offering the number, title, volume, and value of each title, but lacks its classification system by size and subject. Despite a short cross-listing of periodical works, it has neither the subject classification nor even alphabetization to make it a ready reference.

## Arrangement

The catalog uses a numbering system in which the full number is given only every hundred and but which otherwise provides only the last two digits, hence the sequence: 98, 99, 1100, 01, 02.

The main portion of the catalog appears to be in accession order. At the end of the numbers #1,028-#1,728, a cross-listing of about 20 periodical works appears.

## Working Catalog

**Unit ID** MS002-09-104

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5027

**Unit Date** Circa 1830-1848

**Books** 09 (box)

**Container** 104 (folder)

**Language** English

## Processing Information

This volume was difficult to date, for while an inscription makes clear that the book itself was in possession of the library by the end of March 1830, it does not make clear that it was being applied to its intended purpose. It contains a calendar suggesting 1833-1834, but books go until at least 1841 and perhaps 1844, and publication date can differ greatly from acquisition date. Circulation records also show that while created earlier, it was not yet the primary catalog by 1834, and due to gaps in the records we can only demonstrate that the subject system was in use between 1841 and 1848. Although Drinker's name is everywhere, his long service as librarian prevents this information from being particularly useful. In light of all this, it was given a recordkeeping date of 1830-1848, indicating that the collection was documented and it could have been used by librarians during that period, new books were recorded there covering this period, even though the period of active use may have begun at a later, unknown date.

## Scope and Contents

This catalog contains a relisting of the contents of the 1815 catalog and supplement sorted by the first letter of the alphabet with pamphlets listed separately as well as books added between April 1833 and the suspension of library operations after 1848 listed by subject. Although its initial form was compiled

by George Drinker some time earlier, it does not appear to have gone into effect until sometime after 1834 where there is a gap in circulation records. Because the numbering up to 1,725 remained the same, earlier print catalogs can also be employed for those numbers for the period from 1815-1848 even though this catalog alone can be used for the numbers 1,726-1,793 during that period.

Additions beyond 1,793 are only usable for the period 1841-1848, because they were relisted here under a combined subject/numbering system after being originally cataloged differently up to around 1,825. The later rearrangement left no record of how those 30 or so numbers should be understood during the period before 1834.

These later additions occupy the latter sections which include materials published from the late-1830s and early 1840s. Other indications of the ongoing nature of the listings include the blank entry for #351 at the end of Novels and Romances and the blank page with the heading "Biography" following the rest of that section.

The third, and final section, is the "List of Books from the Reading Room." These are dated 1840-1841, and consist almost entirely of new additions to the periodicals with a few exceptions, chiefly among the first few entries. This suggests that the page may not have been used for its original purpose.

The title/subject organization of the latter part of the catalog is helpful in understanding acquisition priorities during the late-1830s and the Lyceum period of the 1840s.

The inside cover contains a calendar for 1833 going through February 1834, with the Thursdays closest to the middle of each month marked (none are the dates of official meetings). There is also a 29 March 1830 inscription by Drinker, Treasurer, authorizing James Dunlap in financial matters while he is librarian, which may predate the decision to use the book as a catalog. Drinker may have done the first 1,725 entries at that time in preparation for the publication of the 1815 supplement.

### **Arrangement**

History #1-122 -Ecclesiastical History Biography #1-145 Voyages and Travels #1-213 Theology #1-113  
Lexicography [crossed out] #1-6 Periodicals #1-31 Novels and Romances #1-350  
As well as the unnumbered subjects:

Poetry, Belles Letters and the Drama Lexicography, Statistics and Encyclopedia Chemistry, Minerology, Surgery, and Materia Medica Periodicals, Philosophy, and Miscellaneous and General Science Law, Oratory of the Bar, and Military and Political Journals

### **Catalogue of the Alexandria Library Company**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-105

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5028

**Unit Date** 1856

**Text** 09 (box)

**Container** 105 (folder)

**Microform** 00039 (reel)

**Language** English

### **Scope and Contents**

As noted in its introduction, the 300 copies of the 1856 catalog were created not as "a model catalog but such a one as would be practically useful to the readers of the library." It serves as a guide to the collection as contemporary subscribers would have known it, covering the first 4,473 volume numbers for this period. For looking up numbers from the circulation records, it is easier to use the searchable catalog of surviving books or the online version. For later acquisitions, one may use the manuscript catalog that was in use internally from 1858-1860 which is arranged by number.

In addition to the aforementioned note on the catalog's creation, the catalog also includes a historical note on the early history of the library and a copy of the 1799 act of incorporation.

### **Digitized Copy**

On Archive.org <https://archive.org/details/catalogueofalexa00alex/page/n5>

### **Microfilm Copy**

Reel 00039

### **Existence and Location of Originals**

Ms 2-9

### **Arrangement**

The catalog is arranged alphabetically, usually by author, but otherwise by title. Different volumes bear different numbers. A certain amount of cross-listing is also evident, most obviously through the appendix

of Tours, Voyages, and Travels, containing works listed by country that also appear in the main catalog by author. Multi-volume works have the number of volumes indicated following their titles, their numbers end with hyphens to indicate an ascending number for each successive volume.

There are some variations in how titles are counted. The "Edinburg Encyclopedia" for example is listed as #1- with 21 volumes but under "Encyclopedia, Domestic" it is listed as "Edinburg" with 18 volumes and a separate 3 volume supplement at #19-.

### **Working Catalog**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-106

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5029

**Unit Date** 1858-1862

**Books** 09 (box)

**Container** 106 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Scope and Contents**

This catalog was implemented sometime in the fall of 1858 as an "amendment" to the catalog of 1856 and was likely expanded on an ongoing basis up to the Civil War. Since the 1856 catalog was presumably still in use by subscribers, the two contain largely the same information apart from three key differences. Firstly, the 1858 added accretions to the book collection, extending the book numbers from 4,473 to 5,063. The second difference is that it lists the books by number, to assist the librarians in managing the books, rather than by author and title, which in the 1856 catalog assisted subscribers in finding them. Lastly, it should be noted that titles in both catalogs are abbreviated in different ways.

Despite the overlap and differences of organization, a person looking up a number in the circulation records between February 1857 and 17 September 1859 may still find it easier to consult a searchable online version of the catalog and reserve use of the 1858 for its last 600 numbers. Starting on 27 September 1859, titles began to appear in the circulation records alongside the numbers, making either catalog usable for numbers below 4,474, although due to unpredictable title abbreviations numerical catalogs remained more reliable.

The catalog was signed by a number of librarians of the company inside the front and back covers, sometimes more than once. This includes a listing made in 1871 which is notable for the presence of names not associated with the title "librarian" by the minutes.

### **Preservation Issues**

The binding is almost completely broken and many leaves are loose.

### **Arrangement**

The catalog is arranged numerically from 1 to 5,063 following the model of the 1815 Supplement, with numbers greater than 100 being listed in full only every 100 numbers and at the top of each page, but otherwise by their last two digits (e.g. 98, 99, 3900, 1, 2).

Entries include the number, title, and volume of the work. The last three pages have volume numbers and titles. Their sequence is unclear and some are periodicals.

### **Working Catalog**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-107

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5026

**Unit Date** c.1876

**Books** 09 (box)

**Container** 107 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Processing Information**

A previous processor had dated this catalog "1799?" but the second page of titles lists an "Address on the Life and actions of Gen. R. E. Lee delivered on the 12th of Oct. 1871 before the Society of Confederate Soldiers and Sailors in Maryland" which seemed unlikely to predate the Civil War by so many years, so a later date was sought. Although the initial catalog was completed in 1874, it has been given the date of 1876 when this copy was physically created by the directors.

### **Scope and Contents**

The initial form of this catalog was compiled by Doctor Theo West and put into use on 10 July 1874, although there may have been additions by the time it was copied by the directors of the library

company into its current form. It was intended for publication, but was later advertised as merely being available at the librarian's desk. It was therefore organized with the aim of finding books by title, like a printed catalog, rather than by number like the manuscript catalogs from before the Civil War. It remained in use until the company shut down after 1880.

The book contains a detailed history of the library company including the text of the 1799 act of incorporation written by "John Stewart, Keeper of the Rolls." It is also the only extant catalog with a book plate, albeit one with the shelf location and classification numbers left blank.

The listing of books is missing the letters O and P at a point where the binding is broken, either because they were removed from this edition or never added in. Title information includes the title and number of each book as well as a "case" number (presumably for shelving) and occasional volume and date information. Space is left in many places for additional titles to be added, although in some cases this was handled by inserted slips of paper. For details on the organization of the title list see the arrangement note.

### **Arrangement**

The arrangement of the catalog is alphabetical by title with a few additional sections by subject. The alphabetical portion includes the letters A-N and Q-Y with the letters O and P missing. The subject headings are "History" after "H," "Letters" after "L," "Memoirs" after "M," and "British Prose Writers" after "P." A similar practice was used for the "Pamphlets" section of Drinker's catalog of the 1830-1848. Books are numbered up to 4,314.

### **Draft Catalog for Letters "R" and "S"**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-108

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5035

**Unit Date** c.1876

**Text** 09 (box)

**Container** 108 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Processing Information**

A copy of the "S" section of the 1876 catalog was found in the circulation book for the early 1840s, although it dated from decades later. It was moved to the same folder as the "R" section, being from the same period and seemingly in the same hand. They were also given a date along with the 1876 catalog.

### **Scope and Contents**

This listing of "R" titles is largely the same as that copied by the directors for the 1876 catalog, but appears to be in a different hand (most noticeably the number 8). The listing for "S" appears to be the same hand as "R." Also included are two pieces of paper with additional titles, and notes in blue asking that additional space be left for new titles to be added. That feature of the main 1876 catalog is absent here and may be the reason it was not included in a complete volume.

### **Arrangement**

The main listing of titles is alphabetical by titles beginning with the letters "R" and "S."

### **Catalogue of the Alexandria Library Company**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-109

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5031

**Unit Date** 1898

**Text** 09 (box)

**Container** 109 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Processing Information**

A photocopy of the original was removed from the collection.

### **Scope and Contents**

The 1898 catalog provides the earliest record of the library's collection after its reestablishment by the Alexandria Library Association, including numbers of volumes and publications dates for each title. The subject classification allows a simple method of gauging the balance of the collection between different areas, particularly in comparison with the publications of 1906 and 1912. Handwritten notes seem to indicate additions and shelf locations, although the date and provenance of those notes is unclear.

### **Arrangement**

Arrangement is by classification number and title based on a version of the Dewey Decimal System, but differs from the fifth edition (1894) in some respects, such as listing 973 as "Egypt" rather than the United States. (see the 1894 at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007477697>)

Class headings and numbers are followed by subclass numbers, the first two letters of the author's name, and a number in case there are multiple books by that author. Volumes and publications dates are appended to the end of the title.

Case numbers (shelf locations) have been written in by hand as well as additional titles written in the margins.

### **Catalogue of the Alexandria Library Company**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-110

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5033

**Unit Date** 1906

**Books** 09 (box)

**Container** 110 (folder)

**Language** English

#### **Scope and Contents**

A complete update to the 1898 catalog, the 1906 retained the same basic classification system apart from the addition of 3 new sub-classes. It also includes a chart of subscription prices for the library at the front giving lengths of time and numbers of books and a large number of advertisements from local businesses.

For the new subclasses see arrangement note.

#### **Arrangement**

The classification is identical to the 1898 except for the added subheadings of Cuba, Japan, and Korea. There is an alphabetical index of subjects.

### **Supplement to the 1906 Catalog (6 copies)**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-111

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5034

**Unit Date** 1912

**Text** 09 (box)

**Container** 111 (folder)

**Language** English

#### **Scope and Contents**

The 1912 supplement to the catalog includes additions to the library collection since 1906 as well as a listing of old magazines, which were not mentioned in the 1906 catalog. Most classification numbers were therefore unneeded. The bulk of the entries appear to be fiction and old magazines.

#### **Arrangement**

The 1912 supplement to the catalog was arranged according the same version of the Dewey Decimal System used in previous publications, with classification numbers for which no books were added to the collection omitted. The two lists of magazines divided them into bound and unbound collections, each arranged by title and date.

### **Catalogue of Old Magazines**

**Unit ID** MS002-09-112

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/5030

**Unit Date** 1933

**Text** 09 (box)

**Container** 112 (folder)

**Language** English

## **Processing Information**

The catalog was previously dated to the 19th century, but has been dated to May 1933 based on the minutes as described in the historical note. The specific reference to a typescript in connection with the term "old magazines" in 1933 is difficult to ignore and the scattered notes on condition fit with the goal of appraising the magazines being pursued at that time. I also found it unlikely that the list was drawn up in 1912 as part of the catalog supplement for that year given the differences in arrangement, like the supplement separating bound and unbound volumes, and the differences in contents, like the absence of the Atheneum from the supplement.

## **Scope and Contents**

This typescript contains a listing of "old magazines" by title and volume that were in the collection in 1933. It also includes some notes on their condition, such as whether they were bound and missing covers, pages, and volumes.

## **Arrangement**

Alphabetical by title. Note that bound and unbound magazines are grouped together, rather than separated as in the 1912 supplement list.

## **Series XI: Circulation Records**

**Unit ID** MS002 Series 11

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4903

**Unit Date** 1794-1879

**Language** English

### **Historical Note**

The circulation records began with the original library company in 1794 and continued until its collapse in 1880. Some of the gaps in the records reflect periods during which its activity was disrupted.

During the War of 1812, British forces arrived in Alexandria on 29 August 1814 and remained there until 2 September. The library normally closed on Sundays, and remained closed from Sunday 28 August through Tuesday 30 August. It opened from 31 August to 2 September, during which time only four books circulated.

The library was also affected by the Civil War. Hostilities between the Union and Confederacy began at Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861. A vote on Virginia secession was held on 17 April and ratified by a referendum on 23 May. Alexandria was occupied by Union forces the following day. Confederate forces had briefly made use of the Lyceum building housing the library, but it later served as a hospital for the Union. Some books were moved out but others were not.

It is unclear were the library operated from in 1861 and 1862, but it did operate. There was a significant reduction in circulation leading up to the war, dropping to a single entry for 22 April 1861. Solitary patrons were recorded for 18th and 30th of May, and an individual withdrew a book every day through 21-25 December, although the May and December entries are in a different hand and initially broke with the format. In early June 1862 however, the library resumed semi-regular hours, usually opening only Tuesday and Thursday but occasionally other days. Records continue into mid-October, after which two pages are missing from the book before it resumes in 1868. Returns are dated as late as December 1862, and it is unclear when the library ceased operations.

Attempts to preserve the library in the late 1870s were unsuccessful, and the number of pages per year charts its decline and eventual failure over the second half of the decade.

### **Scope and Contents**

The circulation records consist of bound volumes containing lists of books checked out. They typically list the name of the subscriber, the date, and some method of identifying the work along with various other details. For much of its history, the old library company identified books only by number, although titles and combinations of numbers and titles began appearing around 1845, with titles becoming commonplace after 1858.

The catalogs can be used reliably for only some of the numerical listings due to additions following the publication of rapidly outdated catalogs and changes in numbering that preceded new ones. They are relevant to some of the numbers for 1801-1807, 1815-1848, 1856-1862, and 1874-1879 (see catalog series notes and below). Because of possible renumbering, the 1801 catalog cannot be relied upon for records prior to its implementation nor after the point in 1807-1808 when its successor went into effect. Since there is no way to know if the 1815 catalog was an extension of the 1808 or if it was the first to change the numbering from the 1801, it likewise cannot be trusted prior to its implementation.

The 1815 and its supplement were used for a longer period and the 1834-1848 catalog used it as a base, despite altering its system of arrangement for later materials and leaving about 30 numbers unclear due to

renumbering. The 1856 printed and 1858-1860 working catalogs cover much of the same material and are usable into the Civil War. Notably, the 1856 is available online in a searchable format. It was arranged to be browsed, while the working catalog is arranged by number only. The 1876 copy of the catalog implemented in July 1874 is missing the letters O-P, but is otherwise usable for the last few years of circulation records.

Even when numbers cannot be identified, useful information can be inferred from changes in the numbering system and preferences for numbers from particular periods, such as for new acquisitions. One can also use the records to quantify the level of patronage as a whole in various periods. There are no circulation records at the book level from the Alexandria Library Association (1897-1937) and later, although summary reports of circulation became common during the modern period and were often noted in minutes and annual reports.

There are significant gaps in the circulation records, which nominally cover the period from November 1794 to January 1880. These come in several different types. Some of them appear to indicate missing volumes, including July 1795-June 1801, May 1811-February 1814, January 1835-February 1841, September 1848-October 1858, and 1868-1870, but there are also gaps of a few months between volumes in 1805, 1824, 1846, 1871, and 1874. Additionally, there is a month of pages missing from the middle of 1831, and two pages are missing after October 1862, even though returns were noted as late December, before resuming in April 1868 (on the Civil War see the historical note for this series).

Title numbers began at around 200, gradually rising to over 5,000 before the Civil War. After the war, numbers ran below 1,000 for the most part, before changing to numbers over 5,000 again on 4 December 1873 (p.279) and then dropping to lower numbers on 10 July 1874 (p.69), with some titles in the 5000s being renumbered to the 3000s.

Many of volumes contain lists of books in their front or back matter, usually including both titles and numbers. This is one of the only sources for matching that information for some periods of the library's history and includes the only reference to the 1808 catalog outside the minutes. They include lists of missing books (the 1822-1824 volume), books sent to be bound (1824-1828 and 1828-1831) and of the Waverly Novels (1822-1824).

Changes in the hand recording the information signal personnel changes, and many of the volumes were inscribed with the names of librarians or members of the company, occasionally accompanied by other kinds of scribbling as in 1814-1816, 1831-1834, and especially 1858-1868. There is also some doodling, which appears inside the covers in a modest way in the 1814-1816 volume and far more extensively in the 1841-1848 and 1858-1868 ones. The 1841-1848 also contains doodles among the actual circulation records.

For the columns and specific information that varied over time see the arrangement note for this series.

### **Preservation Issues**

Many of the books have damaged bindings or missing covers. The 1801-1805 volume has both problems, while the 1809-1811 is missing a page and the front cover. The 1814-1816 is also missing pages, as is the 1858-1868 volume for the crucial period of 1862-1863.

### **Arrangement**

The original circulation book of 1794-1795 contains two different systems for tracking loans and borrowers. The columns of the initial system included, from left-to-right: patron name, the time the book was out, book number, and book size. Each book size had its own column, which from left-to-right were folio, "4-to" (quarto), "8-vo" (octavio), "12-mo" (duodecimo or twelvemo), and "16-mo" (sextodecimo or sixteenmo).

This method was abandoned, and subsequently an attempt was made to record circulation by subscriber. Each subscriber was assigned a number and accorded a set of pages bearing that number instead of page numbers. An index of them appears at the back with some names crossed out. They are not in alphabetical order on the whole, and may represent the order in which they become subscribers. The left-hand pages list the books taken out and the right-hand pages represent returns. As such, similar years and dates are repeated on both sides.

By the start of the 1801-1805 records, the library had switched to a chronological format, which was flexible enough to accommodate increases in the number of subscribers and variations in their degree of patronage but at the cost of making an individual's activity more difficult to isolate. Columns consisted of: patron, title number and volume number, date and day of the week, date returned, and the number of days late and fine (if any).

This remained standard through 1834 with minor variations, like the addition of a date at the top of the page in the 1814-1818 volume, which lasted into the 1830s, and a key for marks indicating returns and renewals in the 1822-1824 volume.

The 1841-1848 volume introduced a new system which separated each set of records into daily sections, with a heading for each day. The columns from left-to-right provided: title number, patron name, returned

date, and subject section; the latter being a feature of the working catalog in use at the time.

Abbreviated titles started to appear near the end of June 1845, with some of them being numbered and others not. By July 1845, a majority of the entries were like that. This method disappeared and reappeared over the years that followed.

Between September 1846 and September 1848 the circulation records were kept in the second part of an account book (see notes for the subscription series). The subject system continued during this period under a new organization of columns, consisting of: subject, number (within subject), patron name (with volume number), and finally a column with either a note saying "return," a date, or often a blank field.

The 1857-1858 volume has alphabetical tabs on which patrons are recorded chronologically under the first letter of their name. The columns are also different. From left-to-right they include: date, patron name (including institutions), title number, and return date. The year is given at the top. In place of a return note, some fields contain other notes like "mistake" or "transferred to Roxbury," which are open to interpretation. Titles resume appearing in place of numbers in mid-1858.

The volume covering 1862-1868 shows considerable variation. Initially it featured columns on the left with headings for each day followed by the patron name, while on the right the columns showed the title number and return date. Starting on September 27, 1859 (page 114), the left-hand column was divided between patron name and title, while the columns for title number and return date on the right remained in place. From March 1860 (page 127) to March 1861 (page 175) it returned to the earlier format.

The 1870-1871 volume introduced the columns that would be standard for most of the remainder of the series ending in 1880. They consisted of checkout date, patron name, book title, title number, and return date. The exception was a period beginning in May 1871 and ending on 1 January 1872 of the 1871-1872 volume. During that period, the records provided sections by patron name, with columns for checkout date, title, and return date. There were no title numbers during that period. The arrangement of names was partially alphabetized, possibly reflecting the addition of new names to an originally alphabetical arrangement.

It can be difficult to tell what year it is in some of the later volumes. In the 1872-1874 volume year breaks occur on pages 113 (1873) and 292 (1874). In the 1874-1880 volume they occur on pages 137 (1875), 275 (1876), 345 (1877), 375 (1878), 434 (1879), and 454 (1880).

### **Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-10-113

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4950

**Unit Date** 1794 November-1795 June

**Books** 10 (box)

**Container** 113 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-10-114

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4951

**Unit Date** 1801 June-1805 May

**Books** 10 (box)

**Container** 114 (folder)

**Language** English

### **Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-10-115

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4952

**Unit Date** 1805 August-1809 March

**Books** 10 (box)

**Container** 115 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-10-116

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4953

**Unit Date** 1809 March-1811 April

**Books** 10 (box)

**Container** 116 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-11-117

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4954

**Unit Date** 1814 March-1816 August

**Books** 11 (box)

**Container** 117 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-11-118

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4955

**Unit Date** 1816 August-1818 June

**Books** 11 (box)

**Container** 118 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-11-119

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4956

**Unit Date** 1818 June-1820 April

**Books** 11 (box)

**Container** 119 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-11-120

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4957

**Unit Date** 1820 April-1822 June

**Books** 11 (box)

**Container** 120 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-12-121

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4958

**Unit Date** 1822 June-1824 August

**Books** 12 (box)

**Container** 121 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-12-122

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4959

**Unit Date** 1824 November-1828 January

**Books** 12 (box)

**Container** 122 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-12-123

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4960

**Unit Date** 1828 January-1831 October

**Books** 12 (box)

**Container** 123 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-13-124

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4961

**Unit Date** 1831 October-1834 December

**Books** 13 (box)

**Container** 124 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-13-125

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4962

**Unit Date** 1841 March-1846 June

**Books** 13 (box)

**Container** 125 (folder)

**Language** English

**Processing Information**

A copy of the "S" section of the 1876 catalog was found in this circulation book, although it obviously dated from decades later than its period of active use. It was moved to the same folder as the "R" section.

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-13-126

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4963

**Unit Date** 1857 February-1858 November

**Books** 13 (box)

**Container** 126 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-13-127

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4964

**Unit Date** 1858-1862, 1868

**Books** 13 (box)

**Container** 127 (folder)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-14-128

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4965

**Unit Date** 1870 April-1871 March

**Books** 14 (os\_box)

**Container** 128 (object)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-14-129

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4966

**Unit Date** 1871 April-1872 June

**Books** 14 (os\_box)

**Container** 129 (object)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-15-130

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4967

**Unit Date** 1872 June-1874 February

**Books** 15 (os\_box)

**Container** 130 (object)

**Language** English

**Circulation Day Book**

**Unit ID** MS002-15-131

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/4968

**Unit Date** 1874 March-1880 January

**Books** 15 (os\_box)

**Container** 131 (object)

**Language** English