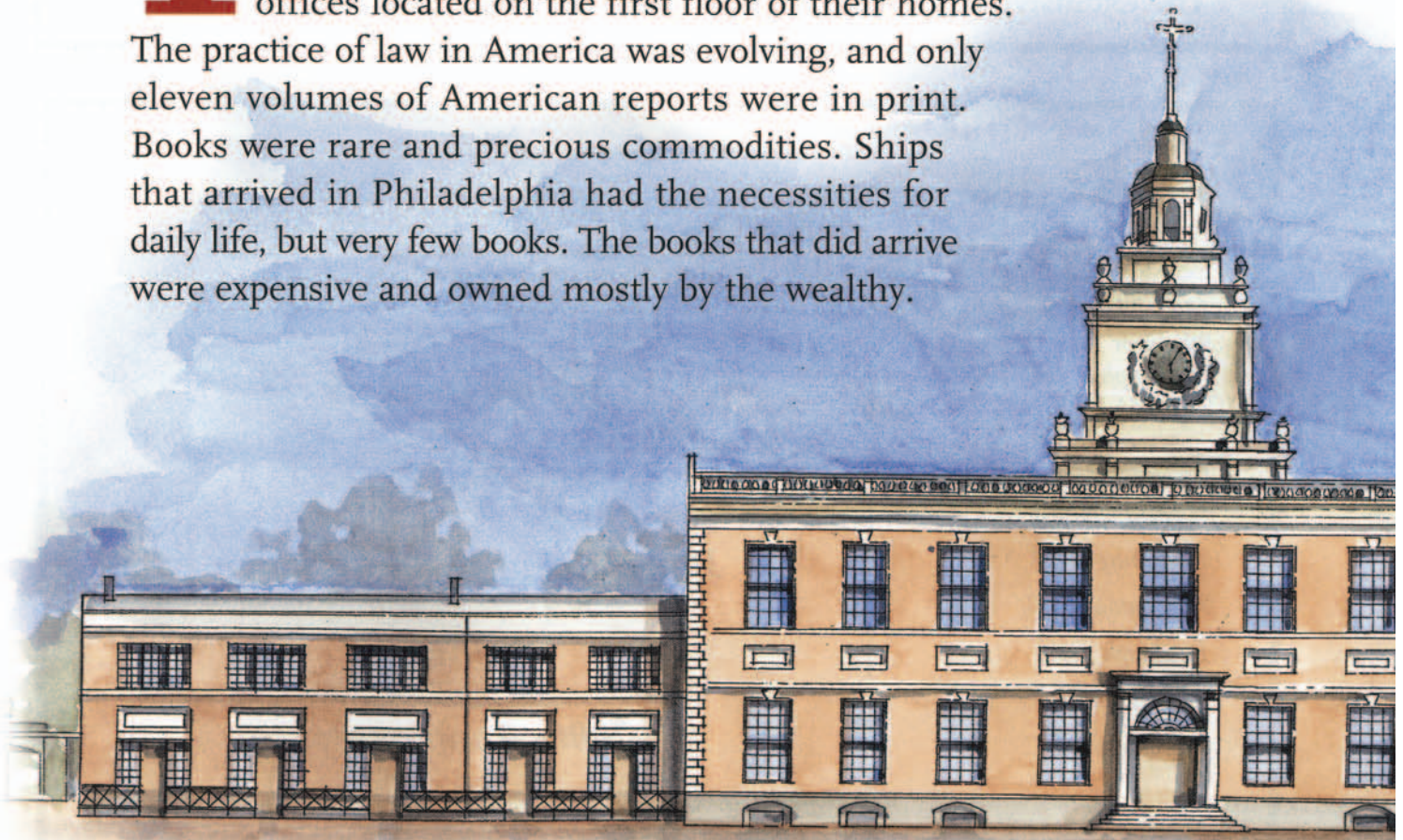


AMERICA'S FIRST Law Library

BY REGINA L. SMITH

IMAGINE THE PHILADELPHIA LEGAL COMMUNITY IN 1802. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court was located in the Old State House, which we now know as Independence Hall. Many attorneys lived in the surrounding area, with their offices located on the first floor of their homes.

The practice of law in America was evolving, and only eleven volumes of American reports were in print. Books were rare and precious commodities. Ships that arrived in Philadelphia had the necessities for daily life, but very few books. The books that did arrive were expensive and owned mostly by the wealthy.



Since its beginnings, the library has resided at seven locations:

INDEPENDENCE HALL

1802-1819



THE ATHENAEUM
1876-1898



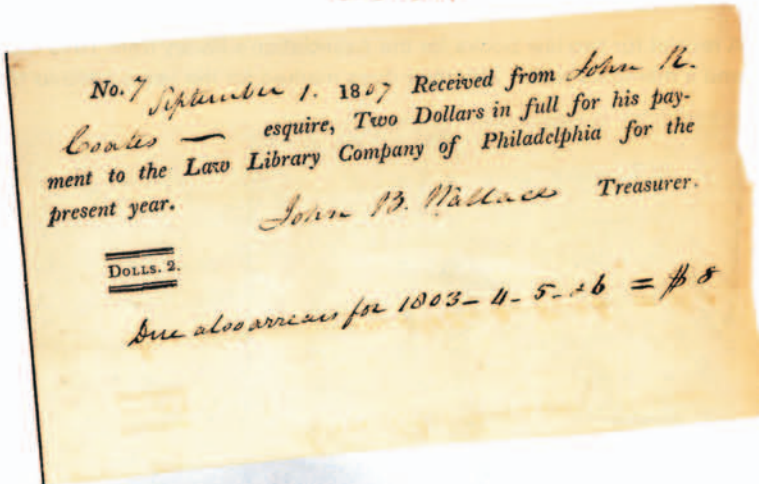
833 CHESTNUT EAST BUILDING
1984-present

NOT SHOWN
EDWARD SHIPPEN BUILDING
1872-1876

THE WIDENER BUILDING
1969-1984



CITY HALL - ROOM 600
1898-1969



1807 membership receipt for John R. Coates. John B. Wallace, treasurer, noted that Coates was in arrears from 1803 to 1806.



CONGRESS HALL
1819-1872

Philad^a 27 Feb 1813

Law Library Co. Botolph Thomas

1 Law of Maryland 31 ——— 1900

1 Smiths Law of Penn^a? 51 ——— 20

09.00
18.99
28.10

Rec^d. payment
W Thomas

A receipt for two law books for the Association's library from 1813 (ABOVE) and a members roster with their dues marked for the years 1803 to 1807 (BELOW).

	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807		1803	1804	1805	1806
P. W. Middle	2	2	2			P. Mifflin jr	2	2		
P. Binney	2	2	2			P. Morgan				
P. Brinton	2	2				P. Moylan	2	2		
P. Burch	2			2		P. Milnor	2	2	2	
P. C. Chauncey	2	2	2	2		P. Peters	2	2	2	
P. Condy	2	2	2	2		P. Phillips	2	2	2	
P. ...						P. Porter	2	2		2
P. Dallas		2	2			P. Rawle	2	2	2	2
P. Dickerson	2		2			P. ...				
P. De Louveau	2	2	2	2		P. A. Read jr	2	2	2	2
P. S. Ewing	2			2		P. R. Reed	2	2	2	
P. Frazer	2	2	2			P. Ross	2	2	2	
P. Franklin	2			2		P. Rush	2	2		
P. Gibson	2			2		P. Swift	2	2		2
P. ...						P. T. S. Supt	2	2	2	
P. Hare	2	2	2			P. T. Sycant	2	2		
P. ...						P. ...	2	2		
Hallowell	2	2	2			P. S. S. S. S.	2	2		
P. Bentley	2					P. S. S. S. S.	2	2	2	2
P. Boyd	2					P. Todd	2	2		2
P. Bolnes	2					P. ...	2	2	2	2
P. S. P. P. P.	2	2	2			P. ...	2			
P. Ingersoll	2	2	2			P. ...	2	2		
P. ...	2	2				P. Taux	2	2	2	2
P. ...						P. Tauxier	2	2	2	
P. Lib	2					P. C. T. T. T.	2	2		
P. M. Lewis	2	2	2	2		P. T. T. T.	2	2	2	2
						P. T. T. T.	2	2		

Jenkins Law Library (2), photographed by Will Brown

Subscription libraries such as the Library Company and the American Philosophical Society Library founded in colonial times had several attorney members, but not a collection of legal materials. So, on March 13, 1802, seventy-one Philadelphia attorneys gathered to found the Law Library Company of the City of Philadelphia, now familiarly known as the Jenkins Law Library. They resolved to jointly purchase legal books locally at auction, and also from London, to establish the library's core collection. Shares of stock in the Company were twenty dollars, and annual dues were two dollars.

By 1805, the Law Library Company had published its first catalog, listing 391 volumes, the most important law books of the time. William Rawle, one of the library's founders, compiled the information, and this was the first law catalog published in America. Perhaps one could say that William Rawle was the Company's first librarian.

The Law Association was ranked among the major law libraries in the country during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its collection rivaling that of the top law school libraries. It acquired its current name in 1967, when the Theodore F. Jenkins Memorial Law Library Company was established with court approval to carry out the provisions of the will of Madeleine Hart Jenkins. Mrs. Jenkins bequeathed approximately two million dollars to the Philadelphia Bar Association to establish a memorial in her husband's name that would benefit the members of the Philadelphia Bar and the public. Judge Jenkins was a former Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association (1921-1923). Initially, the Association thought the funds could be used to establish a Bar home, but it was determined that the gift was not sufficient for that purpose. So, the Jenkins Law Library came into existence. Jenkins is a 501(c)(3) corporation governed by its own board of directors and is no longer part of the Philadelphia Bar Association, although the organizations maintain close ties.

Since 1832, the library has had one constant, and that is its portrait collection. In that year, the Law Association acquired its first portrait, of William Lewis, one of the great leaders of the Bar and a founder of the Law Library Company. Since that time, it has acquired a fine collection of portraits by noted artists including Henry Inman, John Neagle, Rembrandt Peale, Thomas Sully and others. The collection's subjects range from U.S. Supreme Court justices to trial judges, district attorneys and Chancellors of the Law Association. More than seventy portraits

now line the library's corridors.

The library's collection has grown to 380,000 print and 450,000 microform equivalent volumes, with hundreds of volumes in CD-ROM format, and access to materials worldwide through the Internet. It has federal cases, statutes, digests and administrative materials as well as cases, statutes, court rules and administrative regulations for all fifty states and territories. Its treatise collection is comprehensive, and the library even maintains a special area that contains law-related fiction for leisure reading. Notable among the library's collections are its Trial and Pamphlet collections and the Gest Collection of Roman and Canon law. Jenkins still has about one-half of the titles listed in the 1805 catalog, as well as a fine collection of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century legal works, and they are located in a special climate-controlled room.

The library's resources are now geared toward the practicing bar. The library's current president, Harold Cramer, often refers to Jenkins as the "Great Equalizer," as it serves as an institution that levels the playing field for the solo practitioner or small law firm attorney who may not have access to legal research materials or to electronic resources. Librarians at Jenkins will obtain items that are not available on-site from other libraries throughout the world. They will also conduct research on demand for members or send documents to a member's desktop if requested. Jenkins allows its members to borrow books, which is quite a change from the earlier days when members could only remove a book from the library to take to an adjacent courtroom.

Jenkins has recently adopted an educational mission and it offers CLE classes where attorneys are able to learn how to effectively search the Internet and locate government, business and medical resources. The library also offers Internet classes in various subject-specific areas of law.

The Law Library Company's original mission was to support our country's newly established legal system, preserve the records of our emerging legal history and promote equal access to justice for Americans. Today, the library is a place where old meets new and where the past encounters the future. By bringing together the latest information technologies with centuries of legal information, Jenkins Law Library continues in its traditions of resource sharing and personalized service.

Regina L. Smith is director of the Theodore F. Jenkins Memorial Law Library.