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Western Theological Seminary

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**Abstract**

The first Beardslee library was built in 1913, the second in 1955, and the third is currently housed in the Cook Center of Theological Research. The collection contains reports on the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) and extensive files on American Theological Library Association (ATLA) foundation, Sealantic Fund, and Library Development Program. Also included are catalogue reports marking the progress of the library, circulation records and statistics, book acquisitions, library policies, procedures and meeting minutes and memos, and financial tracking.

**Accession No:** W88-0749
**Provenance:** Western Theological Seminary Beardslee Library
**Donor:** Beardslee Library
**Photographs:** 9 images (Box 2)
**Processed by:** Nathan K. Longfield, May 2015

**History**

Western Theological Seminary was founded in 1866 as a part of Hope College to provide continuing education for the seven graduates pursing the pastorate. The Seminary did not have a library until Semelink Family Hall was built in 1895. In 1986, Chambers Library was established in Semelink Hall with a collection size of approximately 4,000 volumes. In 1913, Beardslee Library was built with a collection of 10,000 volumes. In 1954-1955, the library was given a temporary home in Zwemer Hall as the seminary rebuilt its facilities. In 1955, the Beardslee Library reopened in new facility. The collection continued to grow and in 1981 the Cook Center for Theological Research was built and the Beardslee Library covered the first five floors of the six-story building. At this point, the library’s collection had reached 80,000 volumes. Since then, the collection has grown to 110,000 volumes as of 2015. Western lacked a full-time librarian until 1948. Librarians and directors that have served include Evert J. Blekkink (1917-1927, possibly longer), Albertus Pieters (1942-1945), Margaret Van Raden (1945-1950), Mildred Schuppert (1950-1974), Norman J. Kansfield (1974-1984), John R. Muether (1984-1985), and Paul M. Smith (1985-2009). Ann Nieuwkoop currently serves as the interim director of Beardslee Library.

**Scope and Content**

The collection contains reports and accreditation and correspondence from the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS). The American Theological Library Association (ATLA) foundation’s organization, Sealantic Fellowship Program, Lilly Endowment for Furthering Education, and the 5-year Library Development Program (1961-1966) that increased the library collection by over 5,000 volumes. Also included are reports and files pertaining to the construction of the second Beardslee in 1955 and the construction and opening of the Cook Center for Theological Resources (Expand Western) in 1981. Additionally, financial reports,
bank statements, annual reports, contributions, library guides and policies, library personnel, library committee memos and minutes, salary reports, correspondence, photographs and reports to governmental agencies are included in this collection. This collection also includes files and ordering of the Guttenberg Bible to Beardslee.

Container List

Box 1

American Association of Theological Schools (AATS)
   Accreditation Guide, 1971
   Biennial Report, 1961
   Library Questionnaire Accreditation, 1912
Accessions
   Audiotape Cassettes, 1974-1978
   Books, 1930-1947 (2 folders) (see Box 3)
Account Books, 1938-1945 (see Box 3)
American Library Directory Reports, 1980-1982
Annual Reports, 1951-1974 (2 folders)
American Theological Library Association (ATLA)
   Committee on Cataloging and Classification, 1948
   Foundation and Constitution, 1946, 1947
Library Development
   Bulletins, 1961-1966
   Chicago Regional Meeting, 1961
   Cook Contributions & Correspondence, 1961-1966
   Library Accomplishment Report, 1964
   Library Study Report, 1962
   Memorandum of Understanding/ Contracts, 1961-1966
   Overall and General Documents, 1961-1966
   Report of Executive Board, 1963
Lilly Endowment, 1966-1968
Membership Role, 1947-1948
Mid-winter News Bulletin, 1948
Periodical Exchange, 1948-1972 (3 folders)
Pre-registration Form, 35th Annual Conference, 1981
Questionnaire, General, 1950-1951
Questionnaire and Survey on Dewey Decimal System, 1955
Report of Committee on Personnel, 1948
Report of Executive Board, 1963
Sealantic Fund
   Fellowship Program, 1966

Box 2

Bank Statements and Records, 1893-1925
Book List, 1892
   2014-2015
Circulation Reports, 1950-1974
Contributions Requests and Responses, 1931, 1940-1941
Correspondence
   Alumni, 1960
   Misc., 1965
Expand Western, 1979-1981
Financial Reports
   Monthly Library Bills, 1941-1974 (3 folders)
   Quarterly/Annual, and Semi-Annual Reports, 1947-1976
Financial Statements, Monthly and Annual Reports, 1941-1943
Five Year Program of Service and Physical Plant Plans at Beardslee, n.d.
General Reports, 1951, 1974, n.d.
Guttenberg Bible, 1962
History, 1928-1941, 1963
Insurance Lists, 1973
Librarians and Personnel, 1917-2015
Library Committee Meeting Memos and Minutes, 1962-1963, 1973
The Library Record, 1929-1932
Merger with New Brunswick Seminary Library, 1967
Miscellaneous, n.d.
Newsletter, 1986-1988
Photographs, n.d., 1965, 1971 (9 images)
Program Proposal for the Future of Beardslee Library, 1973
Theological Book List (bound and annotated), 1960
Van Zoeren (Hope College) and Beardslee Interaction, 1967, 1969, 1971

Box 3

Accession Books, 1930-1947 (2 folders)
Account Books, 1938-1945 (2 folders)