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A Law Library Journal Centennial Timeline: Highlights from One Hundred Years of LLJ History

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A Law Library Journal Centennial Timeline: 
Highlights from One Hundred Years of LLJ History

Frank G. Houdek

Professor Houdek provides a time line highlighting events, actions, and individuals that have played prominent roles in the nearly hundred-year history of Law Library Journal.

Introduction

¶1 That much has passed since Law Library Journal published its first issue nearly a hundred years ago, in December 1908, is a statement so obvious as to be unnecessary. And yet it is difficult to truly appreciate the magnitude of the achievement represented by the centennial of the Journal without knowing some of that history. That is the goal of the time line that constitutes the bulk of this article—to highlight some of the events, actions, and individuals that contributed to the publication of what will soon be a full one hundred volumes of research and writing about law libraries, librarianship, and legal information. It is my hope that the information provided in the time line will help readers understand the crucial role Law Library Journal played in the development of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and how it came to be the law library profession’s premier publication.

¶2 To begin to put the centennial volume in perspective, consider that there are very few law- and library-related periodicals that have had a life span as long as that of Law Library Journal. For legal publications, the short list of titles still published that existed when the Journal came into being includes the University of Pennsylvania Law Review, which commenced in 1852 as the American Law Register; Harvard Law Review (1887); Yale Law Journal (1891); West Virginia

* Editor’s Note: To commemorate the 100th volume of Law Library Journal, there will be a series of “LLJ Centennial Features” published in the 2008 volume. Individuals interested in contributing an “LLJ Centennial Feature” article should contact Janet Sinder, Editor, Law Library Journal, Thurgood Marshall Law Library, 501 W. Fayette St., Baltimore, MD 21201, (410) 706-0792, jsinder@law.umaryland.edu.

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1. See infra ¶ 6.
Law Review (1894); Penn State Law Review, which began as the Dickinson Law Review in 1897; Columbia Law Review (1901); Michigan Law Review (1902); and Northwestern University Law Review (1906). Library Journal (1876) is the oldest publication in the library field; American Libraries also existed at the time of Law Library Journal’s launch, having begun publication in 1907 as the Bulletin of the American Library Association. Interestingly, the Medical Library Association, which was founded eight years before AALL, on May 2, 1898, in Philadelphia, required four attempts to establish a successful official publication, finally achieving that with the Bulletin of the Medical Library Association, which commenced in 1911 and has been published as the Journal of the Medical Library Association since 2002. However, several other prominent library journals have come and gone during Law Library Journal’s hundred years, including Special Libraries (1910–96) and the Wilson Library Bulletin (1914–95).

¶3 Another way to comprehend the significance of Law Library Journal’s longevity is to identify just a few of the things we take for granted today that didn’t exist at the time of the Journal’s creation in 1908: Life Savers candy (invented in 1912), pop-up toasters (1919), Band-Aids (1920), Wheaties breakfast cereal (1921), sunglasses (1929), ballpoint pens (1935), Tupperware (1945), bikini swimsuits (1946), Scrabble (1948), television remote controls (1956), Barbie dolls (1959), hand-held calculators (1966), personal computers (1976), mobile phones (1983), and Google (1998). Finally, for readers who are sports fans, Chicago residents, or both, perhaps the best way to put Law Library Journal into perspective is to remember that 1908 not only was the year of its founding but also the last time the Chicago Cubs were major league baseball’s world champions.

¶4 Readers should appreciate, as the author certainly does, that the following time line does not in any way constitute either a thorough or a critical history of the Law Library Journal. Over the years, several efforts have been made to document portions of that history, but the definitive work remains to be done. Until that time, however, this time line can at least serve as a starting point for those wishing to learn some of the basics of the Journal’s history. And perhaps it also will inspire an intrepid researcher/historian to take on the task of telling the full story of those remarkable hundred years in the depth that it deserves.

2. The History of the Medical Library Association, BULL. MED. LIBR. ASS’N, July 1911, at 7, 8. The Bulletin was preceded by Medical Libraries (1898–1902); Bulletin of the Association of Medical Librarians (1902); and Medical Library and Historical Journal (1903–07). Id.
Law Library Journal Centennial Time Line

¶5 May 24, 1907 . . . Frederick W. Schenk recommends on behalf of the Committee on Indexing Legal Periodicals that “the Association undertake the publication of a quarterly journal, to be published on the first of January, April, July and October, to contain one article of interest to law librarians, reviews and notices of new legal publications, wants and exchange lists, and a quarterly index to current legal periodical literature . . . ; the funds for publishing this quarterly to be secured from advertisements and subscriptions, the subscription price to members $3 per year, and to non-members $4 . . . .”

¶6 December 1908 . . . Though dated January 1908, the first issue of the Index to Legal Periodicals and Law Library Journal (a combined publication under one cover) is not published until December. An unsigned editorial declares that “there will appear in each issue at least one original leading article on a subject of especial interest to law librarians, bibliographies of special legal subjects, and a list of new text books, statutes, and digests published during the quarter. Space will be devoted to errata discovered in legal publications, queries, and replies.”


¶8 1912 . . . The first-ever formally published directory of law libraries is published in Law Library Journal. Arranged alphabetically by state and province, it includes public law libraries, court and bar libraries, state and government libraries, law libraries of public officials, and libraries of universities and schools for the study of law in the United States and Canada. The name and address of each library is given, as well as an estimated volume count.

¶9 June 25, 1913 . . . At a meeting of the Association’s Executive Committee, it is agreed to turn the business management of the Index to Legal Periodicals and Law Library Journal over to the H.W. Wilson Company “as soon as satisfactory
arrangements can be made. It [is] hoped that the circulation [can] thereby be increased and the periodical put on a better working basis,”9 since at this point “it only partially pays for itself,” with AALL defraying a part of the cost.10

¶10 April 1914 . . . Beginning with volume 7, the printing and business management of the Index to Legal Periodicals are taken over by the H.W. Wilson Company. The editorial work is still done under the direction of AALL, with Eldon R. James of Harvard Law School serving as editor.

¶11 April 1915 . . . Commencing with the first issue of volume 8, Gertrude E. Woodard of the University of Michigan Law Library becomes the fifth editor of the Index to Legal Periodicals and Law Library Journal. She will continue through volume 12 (1919), and later return as editor of volumes 15–17 (1922–24).


¶14 June 28, 1916 . . . Franklin O. Poole, chair of the Committee on the Index to Legal Periodicals and Law Library Journal (a position he will hold from 1915 until his death in 1943), reports that “subscriptions have somewhat increased, the additions amounting to 22, raising the total from 168 to 190.”13

¶15 April 1920 . . . After “so acceptably edit[ing]” the Index to Legal Periodicals and Law Library Journal for four years (1915–19), Gertrude E. Woodard feels “it necessary to give up the work and confine herself to her duties at the University of

10. Minutes of the Annual Meeting Held at the Hotel Kaaterskill in the Catskills, N.Y., June 24–26, 1913, 6 Law Libr. J. 22, 23 (1914) (remarks of President Franklin O. Poole).
11. Book Review, 8 Law Libr. J. 93 (1916) (reviewing Official Index to State Legislation: A Cumulative Numerical and Subject Index and a Complete Record of All Bills Introduced in All State Legislatures (1915)).
Michigan.”14 She is replaced by Elsie Basset of Columbia University Law Library, beginning with the first issue of volume 13. Basset will continue for another volume, but Woodard will return in 1922 to edit three additional volumes (15–17).

¶16 **April 1925** . . . Commencing with the first issue of volume 18, Eldon R. James, librarian of the Harvard Law Library and professor of law, takes over the reins as editor of the *Index to Legal Periodicals and Law Library Journal* upon the resignation of Gertrude E. Woodard. James will continue in the role through 1934, editing ten volumes (18–27), when he will become AALL president.

¶17 **September 11, 1930** . . . The AALL Expansion Plan, better known as the “Roalfe Plan,”15 first appears in the form of a letter from William R. Roalfe, newly appointed librarian of Duke University Law School, to President Parma. The letter is made available to the entire membership through its subsequent publication in *Law Library Journal*.16 The plan, which will have significant and lasting impact on AALL’s development,17 includes such ambitious suggestions as establishing a full-time staff to be situated at a permanent headquarters, enlarging *Law Library Journal*, and seeking financial assistance from a foundation.

¶18 **June 27, 1935** . . . Helen C. Newman, law librarian at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., is elected executive secretary, a new position called for by the Roalfe Plan. She will serve in that capacity until 1945. During much of that time (1934–42), she will also fill the role of editor of *Law Library Journal*.18

¶19 **January 1936** . . . Beginning with volume 29, no. 1, *Law Library Journal* is for the first time published separate and apart from the *Index to Legal Periodicals*,

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15. “[T]he phrase ‘Roalfe Plan’ was coined by John T. Vance, law librarian of Congress, as he rose [during a round table session held at the 1931 Annual Meeting] to endorse with enthusiasm Mr. Roalfe’s suggestions and to move that it be recommended to the Association that a committee be appointed to consider the proposals of the plan.” Helen Newman, *History of the American Association of Law Libraries: The Roalfe Plan and the Middle Years, 1930–1942*, 49 Law Libr. J. 105, 105 (1956) (citing *Round Table Session, June 23, 1931*, 24 Law Libr. J. 151, 160 (1931) (remarks of John Vance)).
17. “Much of today’s AALL organizational structure is a direct result of this plan. The plan would make [Roalfe] the dominant figure in Association history for the next thirty years. While much of what was proposed in the letter has come to pass, it was a long time in coming. Even today, the letter raises issues central to current discussions on the role of the Association.” Michael G. Chiorazzi, *William R. Roalfe: Builder of Libraries, Scholar, Association Animal*, in *Law Librarianship: Historical Perspectives* 215, 228 (Laura N. Gasaway & Michael G. Chiorazzi eds., AALL Publications Series, No. 52, 1996).
following a recommendation of the Roalfe Plan. It will be published separately thereafter.

¶20 1940 . . . Matthew A. McKavitt is appointed as the Law Library Journal’s first advertising manager in an effort to implement the Executive Committee’s direction that the Journal’s income be supplemented with “income from advertising.”19 Not surprisingly, one of the first advertisers is the H.W. Wilson Company of New York City, publisher of the Index to Legal Periodicals.20 Yearly contracts are also made with the West Publishing Company and the Banks-Baldwin Company. A whole page ad on the inside front cover or back cover is $50 per issue; a whole page ad on the back of the table of contents is $40 per issue, $25 for a half-page ad in the same location.21

¶21 May 1940 . . . “Reference Question Clearing House,” forerunner of the popular “Questions and Answers” column that will begin in 1953, makes its first appearance in volume 33, no. 3, of Law Library Journal. The column is edited by Margaret Hall, reference librarian at Columbia University Law School Library (1937–49), who will eventually become librarian and associate professor at the University of Puerto Rico School of Law. The first column includes a form that is to be used on a 3x5 card in contributing questions and solutions for publication in the clearing house.22

¶22 November 1942 . . . Volume 35, number 6 of Law Library Journal contains a letter from President Bernita J. Long, law librarian, University of Illinois, to the membership, in which she announces the resignation of Helen C. Newman as editor of the Journal after eight years of service. Long notes that “under [Newman’s] careful guidance, it has developed from a small quarterly journal published in conjunction with the Index to Legal Periodicals to a bi-monthly periodical.”23

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20. There is conflicting evidence as to when paid advertising was first accepted for Law Library Journal. In her annual report for 1939–40, Helen Newman, AALL’s executive secretary and editor of Law Library Journal, indicated that “[p]aid advertising amounting to a total of $302.00 was credited to the Journal in 1939–40 as compared with $60.00 in 1938–39, a gain of $242.00.” Helen Newman, Report of the Executive Secretary and Editor of the Law Library Journal, 33 LAW LIBR. J. 179, 183 (1940). In another near contemporaneous account, however, Newman subsequently wrote that “[p]aid advertising was accepted for the Journal beginning in January, 1940.” Helen Newman, A Decade of Progress Under the Roalfe Plan: 1931–1941, 35 LAW LIBR. J. 419, 421 (1942). Perhaps the confusion is explained by the following comment from Bernita J. Davies in her history of the Journal from 1908 to 1956: “Paid advertising was accepted for the Journal, as distinguished from the Index to Legal Periodicals, which was first published separately in January 1936], in 1940. . . .” Davies, supra note 4, at 164.
Volume 28, Newman’s first as editor, contained 338 pages; volume 35, her last, will contain 522. Jean Ashman of Indiana University Law Library is appointed the new editor. She will serve from 1943 to 1946, editing four volumes.

¶23 **February 1944** . . . In the first of four issues for the year (down from its normal six issues due to financial constraints), *Law Library Journal* features a “Who’s Who in Law Libraries” profile of Frederick C. Hicks, librarian of the Yale Law School Library since 1928, and former librarian at Columbia Law School (1915–28). Hicks was the first academic law librarian to serve as president of AALL (1919–21). The article is accompanied by a long bibliography of books and articles by Hicks.

Picture a quiet gentleman of Napoleonic stature but minus the pomp, imbued with human interest and understanding, and with a kindly nature. Think of him also as a lover of the arts, and as a person possessed of an overwhelming zeal for learning and progress. There you have a true likeness of the Dean of Law Librarians—Professor Frederick Charles Hicks.24


¶25 **May 1954** . . . In its forty-seventh year of existence, *Law Library Journal* reaches a significant milestone—the publication of ten thousand pages. The special page appears in the middle of “A Common Lawyer’s French,” an article by Samuel J. Stoljar, a barrister at law of Gray’s Inn and professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science.26 Subsequent comparable milestones will occur in 1975, with the publication of the 20,000th page in volume 68; 1989, the 30,000th page in volume 81; and 2001, the 40,000th page in volume 93.

¶26 **June 25–28, 1956** . . . AALL celebrates its fiftieth anniversary at its Golden Jubilee Meeting, held in Philadelphia. The anniversary is also marked by the publication of a special Golden Jubilee issue of the *Law Library Journal*, under the

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editorship of Dillard S. Gardner, which contains numerous articles describing the history and development of AALL, its programs, and its chapters. 27 One of the featured pieces provides “A History of the Law Library Journal” from its conception in 1908 to date, written by former editor Bernita J. Davies. 28

¶27 November 1956 . . . The first prize winner in the Golden Jubilee Essay Contest, “. . . Be Those That Multiply the Commonweale,” by Howard Jay Graham, bibliographer, Los Angeles County Law Library, is published in Law Library Journal. 29 Essays were to address the subject of the American Association of Law Libraries During the Next Fifty Years. 30 Graham’s fascinating piece is written from the imagined vantage point of someone in 2006, at AALL’s Centennial Celebration, looking back on AALL’s second half-century.

¶28 1959 . . . Law Library Journal Cumulative Index, Volumes One to Fifty, 1908–1957, commissioned by the Executive Board at its December 1957 midwinter meeting, is published by the Association. 31 The author is Francis B. Waters, law librarian of the New York Court of Appeals. The book contains separate indexes to authors, subjects, personal names, and books noted or reviewed.

¶29 February 1968 . . . A sign of the times . . . “Viet Nam: Current Legal Bibliography” by Albert P. Blaustein, law librarian, Rutgers-Camden School of Law, appears in Law Library Journal. According to the author, the bibliography “is a by-product of a U.S. Government assignment during the summer of 1967, surveying the legal resources of South Viet Nam.” 32

¶30 May 1970 . . . The first Statistical Survey of Law School Libraries is published in Law Library Journal. It is compiled by the Statistics Committee, chaired by Alfred J. Lewis of the University of California, Davis, and is based on a new

27. Symposium, Golden Jubilee Issue, 49 Law Libr. J. 81 (1956). In assessing his role in the project, Gardner wrote:

I have used the traditional blue-pencil lightly and reluctantly so that the personalities of the contributors might shine through their writing, for they are vital individuals in the living history of our Association. For the most part, I have confined myself to the function of an editorial valet busily straightening a tie here and smoothing a lapel there. . . . If you find much of real merit and value in the following pages—as I confidently expect, and earnestly hope, you will—credit in considerable measure belongs to your Golden Jubilee Committee which planned the issue, indicated the topics, and chose the contributors.

Id. at 81.


subdivision of the annual questionnaire sent to law schools in the United States by the American Bar Association’s Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. Since the ABA is committed to continuing to seek library information through its questionnaire, “for the first time, law librarians will have regular statistical data on at least one category of law library.”

¶31 February 1971 . . . Morris L. Cohen uses his President’s Page column in Law Library Journal to publish one of the most thought-provoking articles in the literature of law librarianship, “Towards a Philosophy of Law Librarianship.” Cohen prefaces his six principles by stating:

Lacking the wisdom for such brevity [as exhibited by Ranganathan in his five basic laws of librarianship], I would like to offer my more rambling thoughts on those principles which I consider fundamental to law librarianship—to call them a philosophy of law librarianship sounds much grander and more presumptuous than I intend. I should note that these assumptions are meant to apply to all law libraries, not just to large research libraries. Bear in mind, however, that they are still ideals or models of what law librarians should be and not yet, perhaps, accurate reflections of the present state of our profession.

¶32 August 1974 . . . Law Library Journal publishes “Law Libraries and Librarians: A Revisionist History; or More than you ever wanted to know,” a groundbreaking article soon to be called a “provocative and insightful study [which] . . . exposed some hard truths about law librarianship.” A later commentator will say that “[f]or historical questions about almost any facet of law librarianship, this article is the source.”

¶33 February 1976 . . . The first in a “planned, annual series of price indexes for legal publications” is published in Law Library Journal. “Price Index for Legal Publications” is produced by Bettie Scott of the University of California at Davis Law Library, who will continue to prepare it for annual publication in the Journal for nearly twenty years; her final edition will be published as a separate booklet. It is now available only in electronic form on AALLNET.
June 19, 1976 . . . The Executive Board unanimously approves a resolution expressing its appreciation to Connie E. Bolden who is resigning as editor of *Law Library Journal* at the completion of volume 69, having served “for an unprecedented term of ten years” and supervised “the publication of an equally unprecedented 5,000 pages” in the *Journal*. Bolden will later say that “[p]robably my most satisfying experience was the ten years I served as editor of the *Law Library Journal*, even more than my term as president of AALL.”

February 1977 . . . The first issue of volume 70 of *Law Library Journal* is dedicated to Connie E. Bolden, editor of the *Journal* from 1966 to 1976. In his tribute to Bolden, President Jack S. Ellenberger writes:

> Throughout this remarkable period [of Bolden’s editorship], Connie instituted numerous changes in editorial practice that by themselves provide a ready standard for his successors to follow, but none seems to be more self-exemplary than what he called his “10-year rule”:
> To publish . . . only that which would be of continuing utility ten years hence. . . . [I]ts regular application has given the *Law Library Journal* both lasting perspective as well as a long line of reliable writing that will probably survive any temporal limitation.

Spring 1982 . . . The *Law Library Journal* celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary (1908–82) with a special symposium issue that is highlighted by a delightful three-part reminiscence from former presidents Marian Gallagher, Julius J. Marke, and Arthur A. Charpentier, titled “I Remember Them Well.” The issue also includes a twenty-five-year history of *Law Library Journal* by its editor, Charles Dyer, and a special edition of the “Questions and Answers” column in which guest editor John Heckel focuses on AALL history.

January 7, 1983 . . . The Executive Board determines that publication of Annual Meeting educational proceedings is now economically prohibitive in print form. Business meeting proceedings will continue to appear in *Law Library Journal*, but henceforth educational programs will be available in audiotapes only. Although the board motion calls for an annual index to be published in *Law Library Journal*, none is available until 1989 when a separately published index to Annual Meeting recordings is included in the AALL Publications Series.

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44. *75th Anniversary Symposium*, 75 LAW LIBR. J. 185 (1982).
46. Dyer, supra note 4.
¶38 October 28, 1989 . . . At its fall meeting, the Executive Board approves a new Association award for the Law Library Journal article of the year. Bruce M. Kennedy of the Georgetown Law Library will later be announced as the award’s first recipient for “Confidentiality of Library Records: A Survey of Problems, Policies, and Laws.”


¶40 July 11, 1994 . . . A special award is presented to Richard A. Danner at the Opening Luncheon in recognition of his ten years of service as editor of Law Library Journal (1984–94). His successor, Frank G. Houdek, will write: “His ten years as editor of Law Library Journal puts him in the AALL Record Book for career longevity. Actually it ties him with Eldon R. James . . . but not to denigrate the accomplishment of Mr. James, I am willing to guess that editing volumes 18–27 was not nearly as difficult a task as producing the nearly nine thousand pages that comprise the Danner canon, volumes 77–86.”

¶41 July 13, 1995 . . . The Bureau of National Affairs pledges $40,000, to be donated over two years, to support the publication of the Law Library Journal. The Executive Board subsequently accepts the gift to give it time to more fully explore all options that would allow the continued publication of the Journal in its current form and its distribution to all AALL members.

¶42 July 17, 2001 . . . The first Law Library Journal and AALL Spectrum Authors Reception is held at the Annual Meeting in Minneapolis. Sponsored by CCH Incorporated (later Wolters Kluwer Law & Business), the annual event honors those who have written for the publications during the previous year. In particular, the recipients of the article of the year awards for each publication are recognized at the reception.

Spring 2004 . . . In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision, Brown v. Board of Education, Law Library Journal publishes a special feature focusing on the case. In addition to several articles, it includes an annotated bibliography concentrating on works that deal with the case’s history or discuss the legal, social, and political issues the Supreme Court considered when making its decision.

May 11, 2007 . . . President Sally Holterhoff announces that Janet Sinder has been selected as the new editor of Law Library Journal, commencing with volume 100 in 2008. Two months later, at the Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Holterhoff will present Frank G. Houdek with a presidential certificate of merit “for his thirteen years of dedicated and exemplary service as editor of Law Library Journal, 1994 to 2007.” Sinder will note of those thirteen years that Houdek “encouraged scholarship about our profession and consistently published articles of interest to a wide variety of readers.”

February 2008 . . . The publication of a selective, annotated list of “essential” pieces appearing in Law Library Journal since its inception serves as the kickoff to the celebration of the centennial volume. Prepared by former editor Frank G. Houdek, “The Essential Law Library Journal” culls from the first ninety-nine volumes thirty “articles that anyone involved in law librarianship, whether a novice or someone experienced in the field, should read and absorb.”

62. Houdek, supra note 37, at 139, ¶ 2.
Appendix A

Editors of *Law Library Journal*, 1908–2008

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<th>Name</th>
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**TOTALS** 99 45,201
Appendix B

Separately Published Indexes for *Law Library Journal*63


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63. Most volumes of *Law Library Journal* contain author and title indexes for the volume.