Summary

Creator: New York Public Library. Central Administration. Director’s Office

Title: Lydenberg, Hopper and Beals general correspondence

Date: 1926-1957 [bulk 1934-1954]

Abstract: Correspondence from the offices of three Directors of The New York Public Library: Harry Miller Lydenberg, Franklin Ferguson Hopper and Ralph A. Beals.

Physical Location: RG 6

Conditions Governing Access:

Access to the collection is restricted to qualified scholars and researchers through the Office of Special Collections, Room 316. Box 29 is closed to research.

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Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Compiled by Robert Sink; machine-readable finding aid created by Jim Moske.

Related Materials:

Creator History

Harry Miller Lydenberg (1874-1960) became the third director of The New York Public Library in 1934,
after nearly forty years of employment with The Library. He started at the Lenox Library, then served as administrative assistant to John Shaw Billings from 1899 to 1908, helping to plan the Central Building for the newly consolidated New York Public Library. He was the Chief Reference Librarian from 1908 to 1927, and in 1928 became Assistant Director under Edwin H. Anderson, assuming the directorship in 1934. Lydenberg was responsible for building the reference collections and began expanding the branch library system. He also was active in various professional organizations, continuing to work with international groups after his retirement from The Library in 1941.

Franklin Ferguson Hopper (1878-1950) served as Director of The New York Public Library from 1941 until his retirement in 1946. After joining The Library in 1914 as Chief of the Order Division, he served as Chief of the Circulation Department from 1919 until his appointment as Director.

Ralph Albert Beals (1899-1954) began his library career in 1940 at the Washington D.C. Public Library. Two years later he went to the University of Chicago as Director of Libraries and then Dean of the Library School. From 1946 until 1954, Beals was Director of The New York Public Library where he concentrated on increasing funding for staff salaries and acquisition budgets and was noted for improving the administrative structure of The Library.

Custodial History

In 1941 when Franklin F. Hopper became Director of the New York Public Library he added his correspondence to the files of his predecessor, Harry M. Lydenberg. Additions were made both by inter-filing into existing folders as well as by creating new subject folders and adding them to the files. When Ralph A. Beals assumed the Directorship in 1946 he made additions to these files as well.

Scope and Content Note

These files contain correspondence from the offices of three Directors of The New York Public Library: Harry M. Lydenberg (November 1, 1934 - October 1, 1941), Franklin F. Hopper (October 1, 1941 - September 30, 1946) and Ralph A. Beals (October 1, 1946 - October 14, 1954). From the original arrangement of files, it appears that when Hopper became Director of NYPL in 1941 he inherited the files of his predecessor, H. M. Lydenberg, and added to them over the course of his own tenure as Director. The additions were made both by inter-filing into existing folders, as well as by creating new subject folders and adding these to the files. Similarly, when Ralph A. Beals assumed the Directorship in 1946 he inherited these files and made his own additions until his death on October 14, 1954. The next Director, Edward G. Freehafer, eventually began a new set of files (also held by NYPL Archives), but a few items of his correspondence from 1954-57 are included here.

The correspondence relates to all areas of Library administration and business, including acquisitions, acknowledgements, complaints, reports and memoranda from staff and the Special Investigator's Office. There are also letters to and from various federal, state and local governmental agencies, and other public and private libraries. The collection provides thorough documentation of the functioning of The New York Public Reference Department (known today as the Research Libraries) and Circulation Department (now the Branch Libraries).

Readers should be aware that in addition to this collection of Director's Office correspondence, there are smaller, separate collections of records from the office of Lydenberg, Hopper and Beals. Additional finding aids for these materials are available.
Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically

Key Terms

Subjects
Branch libraries -- New York (State) -- New York
Libraries -- New York (State) -- New York
Libraries -- Special collections
Library circulation and loans
Public libraries -- Administration -- New York (State) -- New York
Research libraries -- New York (State) -- New York

Occupations
Librarians

Names
New York Public Library. Central Administration. Director's Office
Beals, Ralph A. (Ralph Albert)
Hopper, F. F. (Franklin Ferguson)
Hopper, F. F. (Franklin Ferguson)
Lydenberg, Harry Miller, 1874-1960
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b. 2  American Historical Association
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| b. 11 | Hyde, Donald 1949-1954 |
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Guide to the
Lydenberg, Hopper and Beals general correspondence

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<td>National Advisory Council on Radio Education</td>
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<td>Neinken, Mortimer</td>
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<td>New York City Archives 1935-1944</td>
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<td>Stokes 1934-1955</td>
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<td>Stokes - Permissions 1937-1946</td>
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<td>Stuart 1932-1933, 1941-1946 (2 folders)</td>
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Lydenberg, Hopper and Beals general correspondence

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