

**New York State Library Fire Collection
1899-1942 (bulk 1911-1913)****SC10867**

QUANTITY: 5 boxes (2.0 cu. ft.)
ACCESS: Open for research
ACQUISITION: Collation of existing collections held by MSC
PROCESSED BY: H. E. Weltin, Senior Librarian

Historical Note: In the early morning hours of March 29, 1911, a fire swept through the Assembly chamber of the New York State Capitol. The New York State Library, located at that time on the third and fourth floors of the Capitol building, was devastated in the blaze. Cecil R. Roseberry, in his *Capitol Story* ([Albany]: State of New York, 1964), reported it was the greatest library disaster of modern times; 450,000 books and 270,000 manuscripts, including irreplaceable documents of New York's colonial and early state history, were destroyed. A widely-spread rumor held that the fire had been started by a smoldering cigar butt carelessly tossed into a wastebasket following a late-night caucus, but the most creditable explanation was faulty electrical wiring.

Scope and Content Note: This collection is comprised of three distinct groups of materials, all documenting the 1911 Capitol fire and the Library's efforts to rebuild its collections in the aftermath.

Box 1 has reports inventorying the Library's pre-1911 important manuscript holdings.

Box 2 contains six folders of letters and telegrams of sympathy from other institutions and individuals, along with a manuscript copy of Frances D. Lyon's account of rebuilding the Library's law collection, which also includes many examples of correspondence.

Boxes 3 and 4 hold a series of ten scrapbooks of clippings about the fire. These scrapbooks are also available on microfilm in the main Library's collections, call number MB/FM 027.5747 A2.

Box 5 contains unorganized newspaper clippings.

Container List:

Box	Description
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1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two copies of the <i>State Library Bulletin, History No. 3, June 1899, Annotated List of the Principal Manuscripts in the New York State Library</i>. One rebound copy and one booklet; both have extensive marginal notes. • <i>Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1900, Volume II Report of the Public Archives Commission</i> - includes a lengthy report on the public archives of New York prepared by H. L. Osgood (begins on page 67) containing an inventory of the principal manuscripts in the State Library's collection. Some marginal notes. • Typewritten manuscript <i>Index to the New York State Items in H. L. Osgood: Report of the Public Archives of New York</i>. Handwritten note on title page records "also items in 1911 list of mss which were not in Osgood report and references to Educ. Dept. report for 1912 [1910-11]."
2	Six folders of letters and telegrams of sympathy sent to the New York State Library following the 1911 fire. Primarily from libraries or educational institutions, although a few appear to be from private individuals. Also includes examples of the Library's responses to these.
2	Manuscript in three-ring binder of "Building a Law Library" compiled in 1942 by Frances D. Lyon, longtime law librarian at the New York State Library. Details the process of rebuilding the law library at the New York State Library's new quarters in the Education Building. Includes much supporting material, correspondence in particular.
	Series of ten scrapbooks of newspaper clippings on the fire and its aftermath (arranged by date and name of paper)
3	Volume 1 covers March 29, 1911, A-O. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 1)
3	Volume 2 covers March 29, 1911, P-Z. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 2)
3	Volume 3 covers March 30, 1911 A-E. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 3)
3	Volume 4 covers March 30, 1911 F-Z. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 4)
3	Volume 5 covers March 31, 1911. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 5)
4	Volume 6 covers April 1-2, 1911. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 6)
4	Volume 7 covers April 3-7, 1911. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 7)
4	Volume 8 covers April 8-20, 1911. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 8)
4	Volume 9 covers April 9-December 31, 1911. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 9)
4	Volume 10 covers 1912-1913. Loose clippings in pockets at end of volume. (Formerly cataloged as 027.5747,A2 10)
5	Loose newspaper clippings, many laminated, dating from 1911 to ca. 1913

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