

Baker memorial library 1928-1953. Dartmouth College Hanover, New Hampshire, [1953].

BAKER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

1928 [???] 1953

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

HANOVER [???] NEW HAMPSHIRE

BORN of a handful of classical and religious texts brought into the New Hampshire wilderness in 1770 by the Reverend Doctor Eleazar Wheelock, founder of Dartmouth College, the library at Dartmouth grew slowly through the first 150 years of its history. Retarded at first by the pedagogy of the times and later by the scarcity of dollars spread thin to clothe the expanding frame of the College in its entirety, the Dartmouth library began to attain distinction in the twentieth century. Then, just twenty-five years ago, two events occurred, one close upon the heels of the other, which together sped the Dartmouth library along the path leading directly to its present eminence in the company of academic libraries serving primarily undergraduate liberal arts institutions throughout the United States.

The first of these events was the completion in 1928 of Baker Memorial Library as a gift from George F. Baker made in memory of his uncle, Fisher Ames Baker of the Dartmouth Class of 1859, and the simultaneous endowment by the same donor of a large part of the maintenance costs for the new library building. The College's book stock, then some 240,000 volumes, was transferred almost overnight from crowded and thoroughly unsuitable housing to a building of well-planned spaciousness and great charm of design, with stacks capable of shelving twice the total book holdings of that moment.

Hardly had this development taken place when another large gift became available to the College from Edwin Webster Sanborn, Dartmouth 1878, the income of which was designated by the donor for the purchase of books in memory of his father, Edwin D. Sanborn, graduate in the Class of 1832 and former Professor of English at Dartmouth. This benefaction made it possible to enhance substantially and at once both the quality and the quantity of the annual additions to the College's library resources. The sustained effect of the monumental Sanborn gift, aided by numerous valued benefactions from the Friends of the Dartmouth Library and others, has multiplied the book holdings of the College by three since 1928 and transformed them in the aggregate into a research collection of the first order.



Thus, 1953 at Dartmouth is a year for remembering, marking as it does the twenty-fifth anniversary of these two occurrences which jointly contributed so decisively to the fashioning of an instrument indispensable to the service of a college dedicated to the service of a free society.

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