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## **MATHER LIBRARY AT THE GEOPHYSICAL INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA AT FAIRBANKS**

**By Julia H. Triplehorn**

The northernmost special library in the United States is the Keith B. Mather Library at the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Institute is the only American high-latitude geophysical research facility covering the areas of space physics, permafrost, volcanology, seismology, snow, ice, global change, remote sensing, and the atmospheric sciences. This paper will cover the unique aspects of this library: history, organization, periodical collection, book collection, special collections, and patron services. The library is open Monday-Friday, 8am to 5pm. A combination lock gives after-hours access for faculty, staff, and students.

### **HISTORY**

An Act of Congress created the Institute in 1946 primarily to study the aurora and participate in the International Geophysical Year. The legislation stated that the new Institute would have a director, secretary, and a librarian; the library has played an important role from the very inception of the Institute. In the late 1960's solid earth geophysics was added to the research areas covered. More recently

the Alaska Earthquake Information Center and the Alaska Volcano Observatory have been established (in conjunction with the U.S. Geological Survey and the State geological survey). The expansion of research is reflected in the ongoing development of the library's collection. In July 1995 a branch library containing current periodicals and technical reference materials was established to serve the Poker Flat Rocket Range.

This satellite library serves the technical staff, engineers, and scientists who visit the range to launch rockets into the aurora and lower atmosphere. This expansion is the first of two; the second will be an optics library in a new facility which is being built at the range.

### **ORGANIZATION**

The library staff consists of one librarian and 4 students who each work 20 hours a week. The librarian reports directly to the Institute Director and has a joint faculty appointment for teaching at Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks. The library is administered by the Institute and is not a subsidiary of the Rasmuson Library, although the librarian and her staff work

closely with them on collection development.

The library has an active library committee of eight faculty members, each representing a particular subject area, and one student. The committee assists with book selection and periodical review, library planning, and administration. Their participation has been a major contribution in the conspectus review of the collection and sequential book purchases.

#### **COLLECTION - PERIODICALS**

Periodicals are the most important part of any scientific collection, and this library is no exception. The library receives 325 current periodicals from around the world, but they are primarily English language. Almost all journals are bound and holdings begin with volume one. The library has no periodicals on microfiche or microfilm, which makes it a unique collection. Many visiting faculty wait to do their library research here because of this factor and the interdisciplinary nature of the collection. All periodical holdings are listed on the Western Library Network database.

The library maintains three storage areas for periodicals: Main Library - 5th Floor Elvey 1980-present; Basement - Elvey 1970-1980; Offsite - University Park School before 1970. Although having the collection scattered in this way is not an ideal situation, it has worked out well. Retrieval is made daily from the offsite storage-area while students and faculty retrieve their own items from the basement.

#### **COLLECTION - DATA**

The library has extensive paper data collections from various international stations which cover arctic climate, geomagnetism, ionospheric conditions, seismology, and solar phenomena. The most popular sets are those dealing with arctic climate (especially Alaska, Canada, Iceland, and Greenland). This data has become increasingly important as more attention is being shifted to the study of global change.

The library also has a number of unique data sets, including Synoptic Weather Charts of the Northern Hemisphere 1898-1972, Japan Meteorological Agency Weather Maps, European Meteorological Bulletin, and Army Meteorological Team Data for various Alaskan sites.

#### **COLLECTION - BOOKS**

The library book collection of approximately 13,000 titles supports the research areas of the Institute. Each year approximately 500-600 books are added. At one time the library was given extra funds to expand the collection into the fields of arctic exploration, the history and philosophy of science, physics of music, and educational philosophy--all to provide a greater breadth of intellectual inquiry. These surprising aspects of the collection have added considerable coverage for the researchers' interests.

All books are listed on the Western Library Network.

### **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

Besides the periodical, book, and data collections the library has numerous other unique collections:

PDF Public Data Files - Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey - open file publication from the state survey

U.S. Geological Survey Historical Alaska Geological Library -reference collection on Alaskan Geology

Conoco Alaska Collection

John Mertie Collection - Misc. Alaskan publications and mathematics books

Sidney Chapman Collection

I.G.Y.

Auroral Archival Collection

U.S. Army Cold Regions Publications - extensive collection

U.S. Army Meteorological Team Data - meteorological data from various Alaskan sites

University of Alaska Theses (M.S. and Ph.D) in Geology, and Geophysics

In-house Bibliographies - ongoing

Arctic Atmospheric Sciences

Alaskan Volcanoes

Alaskan Seismology

List of Publications from the Geophysical Institute

Alaska Climate Sources

### **SERVICES**

Approximately 80-90 faculty, staff, and students use the library each day during working hours, 8am-5pm. The following services are provided by the library:

Photocopying of library materials for faculty; Computer literature searching; Reference questions for faculty, staff, students, state offices, and legislators;

Lectures and handouts on tracking information sources on remote sensing, glaciology, permafrost, atmospheric sciences, secretarial reference tools. CD-Rom Products available for literature searching: Georef, Inspec - Physics, Arctic and Antarctic Regions, Meteorological and Geoastrophysical Abstracts, Laser catalog, World Meteorological Organization data, and numerous other data discs

### **CIRCULATION**

Books are loaned for the entire semester. If a researcher needs a book, the librarian recalls it and works with the researchers and students so that only one copy is needed.

No periodicals circulate except when they are to be used for copying photographs of publications. Periodical articles are copied either by the user or library staff.

### **FUTURE**

Plans are to break ground next summer for a new Geophysical Institute addition which will include an expanded library. This building is the first of three which will be adjacent to the present building. The new buildings will house the following agencies: Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey, NASA, Global Change Center, U. S. Geological Survey, National Weather Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey Map Distribution Office.

The new library facility will serve 450 people and will be almost triple the present size. Presently the library seats

8-10 patrons, whereas the new library will seat 125. With this new facility we hope to make the library a one-stop shopping place for arctic and alaskan geophysical information.

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