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Letter to Mary Covington regarding model law libraries, April 20, 1939

James Merrimon

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April 20, 1939

Miss Mary S. Covington, Research Librarian
Duke University
Durham, N. C.

My dear Miss Covington,

I was not only surprised, but very glad indeed to receive your letter of the 14th, and learn that you are connected with Duke University in a capacity for which I think you are extremely well fitted.

I have been over your list, and some things I see no real necessity for in the library. I do think we ought to have Mordecai's Law Lectures. Then you have a book, No. 6, North Carolina Appeal Briefs - I don't know what that is. I think we have all the others down to 23, and we have several Form Books. We do not have the Federal Tax Service, and no Works of any consequence on Taxation. This is a special branch of the law changing continually, and can only be kept up by Federal Tax Service. Mr. Adams and I have it here in the office, and it is burdensome and cumbersome, nobody but experts can delve into the tax problems. I do not recall whether we have 7 and 8 in your $3,000 list, but am inclined to think we have Pomeroy. We have Daniels on Negotiable Instruments, last edition. I am rather in favor of purchasing Zollman on Banks & Banking. A number of these other books from 19 down seem to be a law library for students. In the $5,000 list we have all the Digests except Century. We have the N.C. & S.C. Reporter, Fed. 2nd, and Fed. Supp. The whole System, however, is in the Federal Library over at the Postoffice Building. I notice you do not have in any of these lists R.C.L., C.J., C.J. Secundum, Cyc., etc. I think we have a better library than enclosed in this list, taking it as a whole.

Was quite disappointed in Bogert on Trusts, which I had occasion to use sometime ago, a lot of it is like so many law books at present - peddled in the way of Forms. I have never seen a real good book of Forms for pleadings. We have a lot of them here in the office, and it is a waste of money. I have never seen a real first-class book on Instructions to Juries. We have two or three of those in the office. A lawyer from Winston the other day was telling me that Scott on Trusts was vastly superior in his opinion to Bogert.

I take it for granted, of course, that the prices you fix opposite these books are for new books. Practically all the books I buy are used books, or shelf-worn books, but late editions, and generally bought anywhere from 33-1/3 to 50 percent discount. I had a set of Couch on Insurance offered me a day or two ago for $70. I think we paid $60. for it, and I found I could purchase a set from Mark Squires library for $40.

We have a great many books we want to dispose of, and if some method of exchange could be devised by which these new libraries to be started could use them, it would be immensely beneficial. For instance, we have something like 40 or 50 extra volumes of N.C. Reports which we picked up, had
donated to us, etc. We have possibly 50 or 75 volumes of N.C. Laws, begin-
ing with 1856, and scattered along down the list I notice we have 9 volumes of 1897, 6 of 1900, 7 of 1903, etc. We have a lot of dupli-
cates in text-books; High on Injunctions, 2nd edition; Commentaries on Law of Corporations; Thompson, 7 volumes; Wood's Law of Railroads, 3 vol-
umes - quite a list of them; one or more sets of Cyc. which we have been trying to sell at $1 a volume; one or more sets of A. & E. Encyc. of Law, 1st & 2nd editions, etc.

I have been trying to get our librarian to work these things up, but she does not seem to exactly understand just what is wanted, and I have not had time personally to give it attention.

The library facilities here, taking the Buncombe County Law Library, all the private libraries, and the Library of the Federal Court, give us a library the equal of our Supreme Court Library, in my opinion.

I will be very glad to hear from you from time to time regarding anything you may think beneficial to the Library, and in aiding other Libraries to start exchange of books, etc.

Your message I will deliver to Judge Adams. Mr. Sneed Adams died several years ago, and Mr. Junius Adams, Jr. is now in the Firm. I am not connected with the Firm now, although our offices are in the same build-
ing, and we use the same library. The office force is practically the same - Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Whitfield.

With regards, I remain

Yours very sincerely,

[Signature]