

# Willard Austen

University Librarian

— July 8, 1934

Announcement was made of the death, on July 8, 1934, of Willard Austen, Librarian Emeritus since 1929.

Source: *Faculty Records*, p. 1592, 1846

## **RETIREMENT STATEMENT**

In the retirement of Willard Austen, its Librarian, Cornell University loses an old and tried servant. Entering the library's service in 1888 as a page while still an undergraduate, he has for more than forty years been a member of its staff. Coming to the University more mature in years than do most of its students, he brought an experience in printing and in publishing that from the first were of great worth. In 1892 he was made an Assistant Librarian, and for many years there devolved upon him the care and oversight of the general reading room, a post in which his courtesy and tact and his ready sympathy with the needs of students made him invaluable. Especially during the troubled period when the privilege of drawing the library's books for home use was being extended to undergraduates, his tact, patience, and good temper were of the highest service to the whole University. On the business side, too, his contributions have been notable. His devices for the registration of borrowers and for the recording of loans, making it possible to know at any time the whereabouts of any volume, have revolutionized our methods and have been the envy of other libraries. In all matters, also, involving the use of taste, his sensitiveness to form and color have been of constant value. With these qualities it was inevitable that he should take much interest in library affairs at large and become a leader in the organizations and enterprises of librarians throughout the state and the country; and these associations brought him invitations to other posts. He was, however, too loyal to be tempted from the work begun at Cornell; and when, in 1915, Mr. George William Harris retired from the headship of the Cornell University Library Mr. Austen was promoted to his place. Long before this he had, with Mr. Harris's approval, added to his administrative duties lectures to students on the use of the library; and now he inherited, in addition, Mr. Harris's own course on the history of books and their making. In the early history of typography his own experience as a printer led him to take a special interest, and in this field he has added much to the resources of the library.

Now that his time for retirement has come it gratifies us to hope that the beauty of the site which he so wisely selected for his home will keep him still our neighbor, and we rejoice that his health gives us promise of years of fruitful companionship.

*Source: Records p. 1846, October 10, 1934 Resolutions of the Trustees and Faculty of Cornell University, October, Nineteen Hundred And Twenty-Nine*