

Julia R. Pearce, K-State's First Librarian

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This marks the first in a series of “K-State Keepsakes” brought to you by the University Archives! We hope to share a piece of history about Kansas State University that may include something about the library. The content will vary from focusing on one event, person, or milestone, to including a variety of facts, such as a list of historical events that occurred during a particular month or year.



Julia R. Pearce

Our first “Keepsake” is in recognition of Women’s History Month (March). In September 1894, Julia Roselle Pearce was appointed the first full time librarian at K-State, which included an appointment to the college faculty! This was the same year that a new “Library and Agricultural Science Hall” was completed (the building was renamed Fairchild Hall in 1902) and the publications moved from a room in Anderson Hall. Until then faculty members (all men!) were assigned by the president to oversee the library in addition to their teaching responsibilities.

Miss Pearce was from Manhattan and graduated from K-State in 1890. Before becoming head librarian, she was employed as a stenographer in the office of President George Fairchild, 1891-1892, and assistant librarian, 1892-1894. The Board of Regents granted her a six week leave of absence in 1895 “to attend a library school.” Pearce served as librarian until 1898 when she was replaced by Helen Wescott. There have been 16 heads, directors, or deans of the K-State Libraries since Pearce was appointed of which Dean Lori Goetsch is the latest. More information about the [history of K-State Libraries](#) is available on the Archives web site. Visit us on Hale's 5th floor, Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.