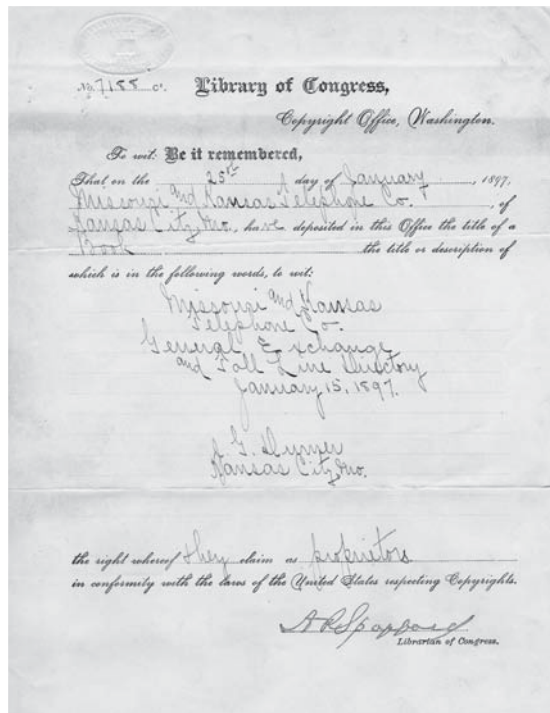


## Certificate from 1897 Has Antique Charm

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*In 1897 certificates of registration were personally signed by the Librarian of Congress. Copyright Office clerks neatly filled in by hand the information on the certificates.*

mailed to the copyright owner upon registration of the work? Why did the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company never receive its certificate of registration for the 1897 volume? Perhaps it was held up because the second copy of the deposit had not arrived. Perhaps the 1898 copy was intended to be the second copy. Perhaps the attention of a clerk wandered. We will never know. But the result for us in 2007 is that we can see an antique certificate of copyright registration that is more than 110 years old. ©

*The cover of the 1898 volume of the Missouri and Kansas Company telephone directory was brightly printed in red and black. This volume, which somehow was stored with the certificate for the 1897 edition, has an effective date of registration of February 18, 1898.*

In 1870 with the second general revision of the copyright law, copyright registration and deposit were centralized in the Library of Congress. At the same time, the Copyright Office began to issue certificates of registration. While the format of these certificates has evolved over the years from paper to digital, nothing beats the charm of an old original paper document.

For many years, Librarian of Congress Ainsworth Rand Spofford personally signed certificates. One of the last certificates signed by Spofford, who retired in February 1897, was issued to the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company, proprietor of the *General Exchange and Toll Line Directory*, on January 25, 1897.

In summer 2007 the Junior Fellows reviewed the contents of 70 boxes of copyright applications, many with attached deposits. They discovered an application dated February 14, 1898, for the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company's *Classified Numerical Directory and Alphabetical List of Kansas City Telephone Subscribers* as of January 31, 1898. Attached to the application and its pristine deposit was a certificate of registration for the previous year's volume of the same directory.

Why is this certificate in the possession of the Copyright Office when certificates were

