

Remembrance of Things Past

Annette Lewis Phinazee

"You should know where you came from to help you to know where you are going" is one version of an expression that is heard frequently these days. We were reminded of Dr. Louis Round Wilson's contributions to NCLA when we celebrated his one hundredth birthday and it occurred to me that a rereading of two of his articles might be appropriate for the 75th anniversary of NCLA. Dr. Wilson was the first Secretary-Treasurer of NCLA.

Similarities between 1904 and 1979 are striking. The 1904 meeting was held at the Colonial Club in *Charlotte*! Mrs. Annie Smith Ross, Librarian of the Carnegie Library of *Charlotte*, was largely responsible for the birth of NCLA. Of the 32 charter members of NCLA, 21 were from *Charlotte*. Could we have picked a better place to celebrate our 75th anniversary?

Dr. Wilson observed that "The program of the first meeting in Charlotte gave clear indication of the spirit and intention of the Association."¹ First of all, the charter members consisted of "librarians, members of women's clubs, and educators." The librarians who were speakers discussed "The Necessity of Library Cooperation Among the Libraries of the South," "Organization of the Public Library," and "Rural Libraries of North Carolina." Are any of these topics relevant today?

A member of the Woman's Club of Charlotte discussed "The Library and the Woman's Club" in 1904. The Women's Clubs are still with us in 1979. The N. C. Federation of Women's Clubs has endorsed the formation of a State-wide Friends of the Library group and is working with the State Library to achieve this goal. Have we recognized them lately at NCLA?

The third group of charter members consists of educators. In 1904, the principal address on "The Library as an Educational Factor" was made by the President of Trinity College (now Duke University). The principal of a Durham high school spoke on "The Relation of the Public Library to the Public School." A Professor of Greek and Chairman of the Library Committee of the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) discussed "The College Library." Dr. Wilson presented a resolution "in support of the work of rural school libraries being established by Dr. J. Y. Joyner, Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina." Today we hear complaints about the indifference of educators in schools and colleges. Can our 1979 efforts to involve them match these in 1904?

Another 1904 speaker who should be noted was "a leading manufacturer of Charlotte" who "spoke briefly on 'Libraries.'" In 1979, business leaders are conspicuously in support of "the arts" which include libraries in the organization chart of The Department of Cultural Resources. What is the role of business leaders in NCLA?

In 1904, "The Charlotte press and local correspondents gave the meeting full publicity and added distinctly to the success of its initial activities." In 1979, a pre-conference on Public Relations is scheduled, because the second most frequently expressed concern during the regional hearings that preceded the Governor's Conference was for "a coordinated and well planned" public

relations program. "There seemed to be general agreement that the public is often unaware of library needs and, what is more important, even of the service available to them."²

Do any of these issues look familiar to you? Does a part of our current identity/recognition problem stem from losing some of the spirit of cooperation that existed among community and professional leaders and among states in 1904? Can librarians and states really operate effectively alone? Have we become so specialized and "professional" that we "talk down" rather than listen to "lay people"? Regional meetings, the Governor's Conferences, and echoes from a gathering of White House delegates at the ALA Annual Conference in Dallas suggest that we can get ideas for where we should go from where NCLA began.

Annette Lewis Phinazee is Dean, School of Library Science, North Carolina Central University, and Past President, NCLA

¹I have taken the liberty of quoting generously from the following articles:

Louis R. Wilson, "North Carolina Library Association, 1904-1943," *North Carolina Libraries* 2 (Dec. 1943): 1-3.

"The North Carolina Library Association, 1904-1909," *North Carolina Libraries* 13 (Nov. 1954): 2-7.

²Ruth P. Watkins, "Regional Meeting Summary, North Carolina Governor's Conference on Library & Information Services," *Conference Report*. (Raleigh: The State Library 1979)

Subscription Service Tailored To Your Needs

Librarians throughout the world use Faxon's computerized technology to manage their serials acquisitions. Utilizing the most advanced subscription processing system, Faxon combines personal attention with a completely automated range of subscription services tailored to your library's particular needs. Faxon offers over 95,000 titles, flexible ordering and renewal plans, a yearly invoice with full periodical information, and Faxon's Automated Claim System (FACS), plus many other valuable subscription services.

Write or call Faxon today for our **LIBRARIANS' GUIDE and SERVICE BROCHURE**.



F.W. FAXON COMPANY, INC.

Library Magazine Subscription Agency

15 Southwest Park, Westwood, Mass. 02090

Tel: 800-225-6055 (toll free)

Mid-Atlantic Reg. Manager: Roy J. Reinolda

901 Broad St., Shrewsbury, NJ 07701

Tel: 201-741-0997