

Warren Wilson College Library

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From a picturesque log and stone building constructed by high school students in 1933, the library of Warren Wilson Junior College near Asheville moved in June 1964 to a beautiful modern building. This move marked one more step in the transition of this unique school from a boarding elementary and high school for mountain boys to the senior college status which is now its goal.

To understand fully what this new library facility means to students, staff, and alumni, it is necessary to know something of the history of this school which Dr. William C. Archie, Director of the North Carolina State Board of Higher Education and a Trustee of the College, has called "by all odds the most distinctive institution of higher education in the state."



Main entrance to the Warren Wilson College Library.

Warren Wilson had its origin in the closing decades of the 19th century when the United Presbyterian Church, through its Board of National Missions, became concerned for the education of the Southern Mountain young people. Among the day and boarding schools established were Dorland-Bell School for girls at Hot Springs in 1893 and the Asheville Farm School for boys at Swannanoa in 1894. These two schools were united on the 1000 acre campus of the Farm School in 1942 as Warren Wilson College, two years of college work being added to the curriculum at that time. With the improvement and availability of public high schools in the mountain area, the need for the boarding high school department decreased, and the last class was graduated in 1957. Since

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that time the school has been a junior college, fully accredited by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and a member of the North Carolina College Conference.

The end of World War II brought significant changes in the student body which, until then, had been drawn almost entirely from the near-by counties. Because of the unusual work-study program and opportunities for an education at Warren Wilson, increasing numbers of young people from outside the state and from overseas began seeking admission. Recognizing the need and challenge which lay behind these applications, and also recognizing that church institutions should no longer serve exclusively a particular regional, cultural, or racial group if these institutions were truly to promote a world-wide Christian communion, the United Presbyterian Board of National Missions authorized the acceptance of students from any section of the United States and from other countries. The 1964-65 student body of 262 comes from 25 states and 24 countries, the overseas students comprising about one-fifth of the enrollment. While operated by the United Presbyterian Church, the school welcomes to its fellowship young people of any denominational or religious background.

It is the boast of Warren Wilson that no deserving and qualified youth is turned away for lack of money. Financial help is provided through National Missions scholarships, through scholarships provided by friends and alumni, and in large part by the work program. Among American colleges, the work program is probably unique, both in its philosophy and its operation. The college is maintained in all aspects by the work of students and faculty, the saving in operational costs making it possible to keep tuition rates very low. Every student works part of each day, regardless of his tuition contract. There are no wages paid, no rates of pay according to the job. Everyone's work counts equally, and no student is asked to do work that is not essential to the well-being of the college community. In addition to earning part of his fees, the work experience for every student is regarded as a vital part of the college's educational program, not only for those who put theory into practice, but for every student to learn how to organize his time and efforts, how to work with other people, and learn the satisfaction of a job well done.

It was as part of the work program that high school boys constructed a log building for a library in 1933. Other students fashioned the large stone fireplace, made door hinges and other metal fixtures in the school shop, and built tables and shelves. Total construction costs were about \$1000, and it was a proud day for this small school when the book collection was moved from a room in the administration building to a library seating 50 students. Two stone wings were added by later students as the demands of the junior college brought about growth in the book collection and need for more seating space. Visiting alumni never fail to point out to latter-day librarians and students the part they had in the construction of the log library.

As this building was outgrowing its usefulness as a library, plans were underway for the next major step in the school's development-expansion to senior college status. In recent years more than 75% of those receiving the Associate in Arts degree from Warren Wilson have gone on to make fine records in senior colleges and universities in all parts of the U. S. Because Christian leaders are not really molded in two years, and because many students cannot finish college without the kind of help Warren Wilson

provides through its work program and scholarships, the school seeks to extend its usefulness by providing a four-year college program. A campaign is presently underway to secure funds for the remaining plant and equipment needed to expand the academic program and to increase the enrollment to approximately 500 students. A fixed date for the initiation of the senior college curriculum has not been set.

Meanwhile the Trustees and administration recognized the vital role the college library would play in this expansion and the need for strengthening the library in advance of curriculum changes. Thus construction of the library was one of the first steps in the building program.

Architect for the library was Anthony Lord of Six Associates, Asheville. The exterior of field stone, timber, and precast concrete panels blends with the design of the student center-dining hall building across the road.

The library has a floor area of approximately 14,424 square feet on two levels. At present, only the main floor of 8,286 square feet is being used. The site is on a slope, and the lower floor, when needed, will provide above ground reading room space with a beautiful view. The site and design of the building allow for further expansion.

The present book capacity is 40,000 volumes in open stacks provided by Estey. It is anticipated that shelving for another 40,000 volumes can be installed on the lower floor.

Seating capacity is now 96, thus accommodating more than one-third of the student body at any time. Additional seating which may be provided on the lower floor will be ample for the needs of an anticipated enrollment of 500. A variety of seating is available—at tables, in carrels, and in comfortable lounge chairs.

The accompanying interior picture, made immediately after the move last June, does not show the attractive lounge areas added at either end of the main reading room, where



View of a study area and open stacks in the library.

rugs, colorful upholstered chairs, and reading lamps provide comfort and an atmosphere conducive to reading. The picture does show the one sentimental yet practical tie with the old building—the study tables made by Farm School boys. While students had little part in the actual construction of the present building, they have built 10 individual study desks and other equipment.

The main floor houses, in addition to the reading, reference, and stack areas, the librarian's office, a conference room, listening room, and an adequate workroom with outside door opening onto a loading platform. Rest rooms are on the lower level.

The new building was made possible in part by gifts from the Public Welfare Fund, a private foundation in Washington, D. C. Total cost of the building, exclusive of site and equipment, was approximately \$175,000.00. Landscaping, a student work project, is now underway.

Policies for the library are determined by a strong faculty library committee with the Dean as chairman. There is a staff of two professional librarians and 11 part-time student assistants.

By the end of this school year, the library will have a book collection of approximately 20,000 volumes. With its vision fixed on the goal ahead, the aim is to double this collection in the next few years. To that end, the administration has greatly increased the annual book budget, the alumni have raised \$6000, many special gifts have been received, and \$60,000 of the \$1,000,000 expansion fund now sought is designated for the library collection.

Warren Wilson College has the building; it intends to have the books and other library materials when it takes that next step to senior college rank. Truly this is one small college which puts into action its belief that the library is the most important intellectual resource of the academic community.

Re: Proposed Adult Services Section of NCLA

At the 1963 NCLA Biennial Conference a meeting, sponsored by the Adult Services Committee of the Public Libraries Section, was held to discuss the Committee's recommendation to organize an Adult Services Section of the North Carolina Library Association. The objectives of the proposed Section, as stated by the Committee, were as follows:

- (a) To unite in this group North Carolina Library Association members interested in adult services.
- (b) To provide learning opportunities for librarians in all types of libraries serving adults.
- (c) To assist librarians and governing bodies in continuing efforts to interpret and emphasize the essential role of adult services in the library program.
- (d) To serve as a clearing house for information pertaining to adult education.