

PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY

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North Carolina Library Commission

Ninety-two public libraries returned the questionnaires entitled KNOW YOUR NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARY PATTERN which were sent out in June, 1944. The answers have presented some interesting, some discouraging, and much encouraging material. Of the ninety-two libraries, sixty-nine were county and eighteen local public libraries. Thirteen county and six local public libraries which did not return the questionnaire are not included. Only four separate reports were received from Negro public libraries

though several of the white libraries included figures of Negro library service.

Buildings

Four public libraries are housed in buildings built previous to 1800 and thus are helping to preserve these landmarks and to continue their historical significance. The earliest building used as a library is the Cupola House at Edenton which was built in 1722. The Carnegie Library buildings which have served well their purpose are thirty and forty years old and have long been outgrown. A majority of the public libraries have need of new lighting and heating systems. Eighty-five of the ninety-two libraries reporting state that shelving space will not take care of the next five years' growth at the present rate of additions to the book collections. Eighteen of the public libraries report that the library sign is not legible from the street. This would appear to be a simple matter to rectify with a little time and thought, and a sign bespeaks a wide-awake service. Only half of the libraries have telephones.

Since 1930, eleven new public library buildings have been opened and three buildings remodeled for public library use exclusively. Public library rooms have been provided in twenty-five communities, in the county court house, the city hall, a community building, a county annex, the Junior Order building as in Lexington, or a remodeled railway station as in Beaufort. The most recently remodeled library building was opened in the summer of 1944, the George H. and Laura E. Brown Library of Washington.

New library buildings, as part of the post-war planning, should be planned by a competent librarian and an architect working in collaboration. They should be centrally located; be functionally designed; be adequate for readers, books and working space; equipped with

modern lighting, heating and furnishing; and planned for a period of growth and expanded service. Some counties and cities are already collecting funds and library plans and discussing adequate service.

Personnel

Fifty-two libraries employ librarians who are graduates of accredited library schools. More than half of the libraries employ as library assistants people who are college graduates.

Library trustees, appointed by city and county commissioners, represent many interests in the communities and are composed of teachers, school superintendents, ministers, women's club members, newspapermen, business men and labor groups.

Librarians have accepted invitations to talk to such civic groups as Boy Scouts, Home Demonstration clubs, church organizations, women's clubs, and to Rotarians, Lions, and Kiwanians.

Reading programs were carried out with women's clubs and Home Demonstration clubs. Twenty-eight public libraries carried out programs of summer reading for children.

Book Collections

The public library has the responsibility of providing books which will contribute to an enlightened citizenry. To do this, the book collection must reflect the basic library objectives—education, information, recreation and research—and meet the needs of readers of all ages and of varied interests and educational background.

To make available the best literature the book collection based on the population to be served should be at least two books per capita. A minimum book collection for the smallest population is 6000 volumes. Of the ninety-two libraries reporting, no library has one book per capita. The largest per capita book collection is in Davidson County

which has four-fifths of a book per person. The smallest book collection has less than one-tenth of a book per person. The average for the state as a whole is one-third of a book per person.

State Aid for Public Libraries has been used mainly for the purchase of books. In 1943-44, 164,232 volumes were added to the public libraries but 47,976 books were worn out and withdrawn from use. One of the greatest needs for public library development is additional books to supply the changing and increasing number of readers.

Extension of Service

Thirty-eight of the ninety-two libraries reporting have bookmobile service which takes books on regular schedules to those people who live too far to use the central library easily. Branch libraries are those with permanent book collections, quarters for reading and for lending books during specified hours. All of these are in charge of a paid worker under the watchful eye of the county librarian. Ten libraries reported branches.

Fifty-seven libraries reported book stations. County library service to the small communities, cross-roads and neighborhoods is developed through library stations, or collections of books exchangeable with the central book collection. Bookmobiles facilitate such service and give the people an opportunity to select their books. Where bookmobiles are not available, books are sent out to branches and book stations.

Larger areas of service with larger book collections, more people to be

served and a larger taxing basis provide for service superior to that of small, single counties, each standing alone. Regional libraries of two or more counties can spend the book funds more economically by exchanging books between counties; by employing a supervising librarian who can work in all counties; and by using one or more bookmobiles to reach every section of the region. Thirteen North Carolina counties have formed five regions. Several of the smaller or poorer counties could well enter into such a plan with adjoining counties.

Post-War Plans

Fifty-four libraries report that plans for improved and extended library service for the post-war period have been worked out and discussed by the library board. Some libraries need new library buildings or enlarged space; some libraries need trained, experienced librarians who will be educators in the broadest sense; some libraries need trained library assistants; some need new bookmobiles and better service for the whole county; all need enlarged book collections; all libraries need increased financial support.

North Carolina public libraries expended 21 cents per capita for the year 1943-44. The national average of library income is 42 cents per capita—twice that of North Carolina.

Excellent progress has been made in public library service since State Aid was first voted in 1941, as shown by the table which compares 1940 with 1944.

NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARY STATISTICS POPULATION 3,571,623

	1940	1944
People without public library service	1,742,220=48%	411,174=11%
Income	\$328,344.31=.09c per capita	\$ 762,446=.21c per capita
Volumes	940,877=¼ bk. per capita	1,242,413=½ bk. per capita
Circulation	5,992,548=1.67 per capita	6,000,605=1.68 per capita
	27 counties with at least \$1,000	80 counties with local and state appropriations