



Miss Carrie Broughton, State Librarian, 1917-1956

"MISS CARRIE"

*By MARGARET B. PRICE**

On June 30 Miss Carrie L. Broughton will retire as State Librarian, thus terminating fifty-four years of continuous service in the State Library.

Miss Carrie, as she is affectionately known throughout the state, began her career as a librarian in 1902 when she was appointed as assistant to Mr. Miles O. Sherrill who was at that time State Librarian. Her appointment was unique in that never before had a woman been employed to serve in any capacity in the State Library. In the ensuing years Mr. Sherrill apparently found his choice of an assistant a fortunate one for repeatedly in his biennial reports he referred to the "invaluable service rendered by my competent and efficient assistant in the management of the library."

The State Library in 1902 was housed in three inadequate rooms in what was then the Supreme Court building—now the Labor building. Its miscellaneous collection of books had never been catalogued by any standard system of library classification. The amount received from the state's General Fund for maintenance was very small, and the staff consisted of the State Librarian and one assistant.

*Chief Assistant, State Library, Raleigh.

However, by expedient use of the funds available, aided by gifts from interested persons the library's book collection grew appreciably. For the sake of rendering more efficient service to an increasing number of patrons it was decided that the time had arrived for a formal system of classification and cataloging. To Miss Broughton was relegated the task of cataloging the books according to the Dewey Decimal system—a task which involved the reorganization of the entire library.

There were no funds available to employ additional help for this special undertaking, and the only assistance Miss Broughton had came from Miss Minnie W. Leatherman who was at that time Secretary and Director of the Library Commission.

The last detail of the project was completed in 1912 when Miss Broughton and Miss Leatherman segregated the North Carolina items, both books and pamphlets, from the general works making a special North Carolina collection.

It was Miss Broughton's ambition to have a separate room for this collection when the library was moved to its present location in 1914, but this ambition has never been realized.

In 1916 Mr. Sherrill retired as State Librarian, and the trustees of the library found themselves confronted by a real problem. The logical person to succeed Mr. Sherrill was Miss Broughton. There was no doubt about her capability proven by her fourteen years of service, but she was a woman, and never had a woman been chosen to head a state department. The trustees were reluctant to break this precedent, in fact, they heartily disapproved of having a woman as a department head. This sentiment was shared by a good many others including most of the state officials. There were others, among whom were Dr. J. Y. Joyner and Judge Walter Clark, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who were not bound by prejudice and precedents and who actively gave their support to Miss Broughton's appointment.

Assuring Miss Broughton that they appreciated her worth and there was nothing personal in their decision, the trustees appointed Mr. A. J. Fields as State Librarian.

After about six months Mr. Fields resigned and a campaign for Miss Broughton's appointment as State Librarian began in earnest. The crusade in her behalf was supported by the North Carolina Library Association, leading librarians in the state, the Library Commission, Mrs. Kate Burr Johnson who represented the Federation of Women's Clubs, and a large number of prominent lawyers throughout the state.

From the ranks of the opposition was advanced the question as to the constitutionality of appointing a woman as a state official, and as State Librarian Miss Broughton would certainly be a state officer. The question was referred to Chief Justice Clark for a ruling, and he assured the proponents of the idea that there was nothing in the state constitution to prohibit a woman from being a state officer.

With Miss Broughton's champions persistent and no legal loopholes to substantiate the prejudice against a woman as a state official, the trustees capitulated and appointed her as State Librarian. However, on one point they were adamant. The State Librarian's salary of one hundred and forty-five dollars per month was considered too much for a woman to receive, and they stipulated that a portion of it should be divided between her assistant and the janitor.

How Many Can We Keep in North Carolina?

Here are some of the students now enrolled in the School of Library Science UNC. They are: (*first row*) Mary Guy Boyd, Bill Ach, Frances Ann Bold, Wesley Pinkerton, Walter Barnard, Carrie Gene Ashley and Jean Harris. (*Second row*) Richard Cole, Grace B. Farrior, John Peck, Bill Wilkinson, Mary Norwood, Frances Hall, Lucia Johnson, Emma Dendy, Sally McAllister. (*Third row*), Virginia Dober, Mildred Farrow, Mary Canada, Phyllis Shepherd, Mary Frances Morris, Terecinha Crisostomo, Pat Warren.



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The genealogical collection which is considered the finest in North Carolina may be credited entirely to Miss Broughton's efforts and planning for when she assumed office the collection was practically non-existent. Interest in genealogy has increased in the last few years, and the many rare volumes pertaining to the subject which Miss Broughton collected in spite of a limited budget are extensively used and appreciated by patrons both in and out of the state.

When several projects to locate and identify resources in the state are complete, Miss Carrie's contribution in collecting and preserving important materials will be even more apparent.
