

# NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

VOL. III

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No. 2

## DEVELOPMENT OF NEGRO LIBRARIES IN NORTH CAROLINA

By MOLLIE HUSTON LEE

*Richard B. Harrison Public Library, Raleigh*

The North Carolina Negro Library Association which celebrated its 10th anniversary in Raleigh February 4-5, 1944, had its beginning at Shaw University. The librarian at this institution had the idea that the profession, although rather new among the members of her race, should have some type of organization in order to encourage and stimulate those in the profession. Letters were sent to all available librarians in the state to ask their opinion of such an effort. The response was encouraging. Some replied that there were too few Negro librarians in the state, and suggested that it be a national association. Others felt that we should ask admittance into the white state library association while still others believed that a Negro state library organization would be the best beginning. All, however, were interested in some type of organized efforts.

On the committee to make arrangements for the first meeting were Miss Marjorie Shepard, Librarian, N. C. College for Negroes; Miss Pearl Snodgrass, Librarian, St. Augustine's College; Miss Marjorie Beal, Secretary and Director, N. C. Library Commission; Miss Jeannette Hicks, Librarian, Washington High School and Miss Mollie H. Huston (Mrs. James S. Lee), Librarian, Shaw University.

At this meeting, held April 20-21, 1934, there were 11 college, 13 school and 2 public librarians present, a total of 26 as compared with 200 at the 1944 meeting. Of this number five had bachelor's degrees in library science, one, a master's degree and the others little or no professional training. This small group discussed with great zeal the possibility of organizing an association and the final decision was that there should be a North Carolina Negro Library Association. The following officers were elected, Miss Mollie H. Huston, President; Miss Mollie E. Dunlap, Vice-President; Mrs. Josephine P. Sherrill, Secretary; and Miss Pearl Snodgrass, Treasurer. Speakers at this meeting were Dean Foster Payne, Miss Marjorie Beal, Dean Robert B. House, Miss Jaynie M. Shelton, Miss Nora Beust, Mrs. Mary P. Douglas, Mr. Charles Stone and Miss Mollie H. Huston. Everyone left the conference with a feeling that it marked a very definite step toward the progress of Negroes in the library field. The next meeting was held at St. Augustine's College.

It was early recognized that the success of any organization depends on the benefit accrued to its constituency. With this in mind, the association has always endeavored to obtain the foremost authorities as speakers at the meetings. This policy, perhaps more than anything, has accounted for the growth and sustained interest of the members in the association. Soon it became evident that if the rapidly expanding membership was to receive the full advantages of the association some

**East Carolina Teachers**

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provision must be made for those interested in the specific areas of the field. Therefore, at the 1936 meeting at Winston-Salem Teacher's College, the conference was divided into groups so that the various branches of the profession might discuss their problems.

In 1935 it was voted that there be an official publication. This had a bad beginning and it has never been published regularly. In 1939, Mrs. Mary M. Hariston was appointed chairman of a committee to compile a handbook of the North Carolina Negro Library Association. This was ready for distribution in 1940. At the 1940 meeting it was decided that the association should sponsor the library section of the North Carolina Negro Teachers Association. An appropriation was made at the 1941 meeting to enable Mr. A. P. Marshall to continue to compile a guide to Negro periodical literature. Mr. Marshall was inducted into the armed forces early in 1943, consequently only one issue of volume 2 of this index which covers 18 periodicals was published. In 1943, the association had the distinction of being the first Negro Library association to be admitted as a chapter of the American Library Association. At the 1944 meeting it was decided to request the North Carolina Legislature for an appropriation for a state Negro library adviser.

The rapid growth of the profession can be attributed largely to the Hampton Library School which was established in 1925 and closed in 1938. This school graduated 183 librarians, 13.65% of which are employed in the state. The next library school to be established was at North Carolina College for Negroes in 1939. It has graduated 18 librarians and 50% of these are employed in the state. Atlanta University School of Library Service had its beginning in 1941. Thirty-nine librarians have been graduated and 15.38% are now employed in North Carolina. This school is the only

accredited Negro library school in the country.

School libraries have shown unusually rapid growth in the past decade. This, no doubt, may be attributed to the fact that teachers and administrators feel that the function of the school library, as defined by Fargo,\* "Is to act as a vital educational agent within the school, providing enrichment for curriculum, opportunities for social development, and an urge towards the lifelong use of books for intellectual advancement and for pleasure." There is no question that the library is beginning to be a center around which all the activities and objectives of the school revolve.

A great deal of the development can also be attributed to the WPA library program which supplied the schools with library clerks, the NYA project which gave students employment in the libraries and an alert state library adviser. As one visits the schools and notes the physical improvements in the libraries, the larger and more alive book collections, and teacher-librarians scheduled more time in the libraries there is a gratifying feeling that the school library is beginning to assume its rightful place in the general improvement of the schools.

The following figures were taken from the School Library Statistical Report compiled by the State Department of Public Instruction:

#### NEGRO PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARIES

	1932-33	1942-43
No. Schools Reporting.....	211	422
No. Pupils Enrolled.....	58,708	135,454
No. Books in Libraries.....	126,329	371,875
Average Circulation .....	268,572	990,975
Average Circulation per Pupil .....	4.6	7.32
Library Expenditures .....	\$13,286.30	\$52,983.12
Library Expenditures per Pupil .....	.23	.39
No. of Librarians with Some Training .....	108	222
In 1943 there were 359 school librar-		

\* Fargo, L. F. *The Library in the School*, p. 505.

ians. Thirty-four of these have to their credit 30 or more semester hours in library science. There are 21 full-time librarians, 201 part-time librarians with some library training and 137 teacher-librarians with no library training.

There are no full-time school library supervisors, but in some of the cities, one librarian is selected from the school system to act as a library chairman. It is her duty to visit school libraries in the city and make suggestions, call meetings, aid in book selection, and see that the general library policies of the system are enforced. Raleigh has an unique situation. The librarian at the public library is a part-time supervisor of the school libraries. One of the most important advantages of this connection is that it enables the public library to supplement the school book collection. It also allows the two agencies to keep informed as to each other's programs.

Public library facilities for Negroes have developed mostly in the past five years. This has been due largely to the WPA library program, State Aid, community pride and interest, and a library commission which has enthusiastically encouraged the establishment of public libraries.

There are in 1944 thirty-three public libraries in the state. The oldest of these is located in Charlotte and was opened to the public in 1905. This gave Charlotte the distinction of being the first city to build a library for Negroes with its own funds. Five of the public libraries are housed in buildings of their own, 8 are connected with schools, and 20 are in rented property or community centers. Durham, Greensboro, Wilmington, and Raleigh have independent libraries.

In 1941, the General Assembly passed a bill for State Aid for Public Libraries and appropriated \$100,000 for each year. In 1943, this amount was increased to \$125,000 per year. One important sentence in the bill reads, "The fund shall

be used to improve, stimulate, increase and equalize public library service to the people of the whole state." The North Carolina Library Commission Board was authorized and empowered to administer the fund. There are no statistics available which indicate what percent of these funds are going to Negro libraries, but all indications are that the funds which are allotted have increased county library service. Of the 15 counties receiving state aid for Negro libraries, Durham, Hertford, and Wake are getting 1/3 of the amount appropriated to the county. The remainder are getting from \$10 to \$25 per month. Twenty-seven counties were allotted \$50 for the purchase of books.

The Negroes in Hertford County had the honor of being the first in the state to purchase and operate a bookmobile. This bookmobile has been in operation since 1939. Stanford L. Warren Library is the only other library which owns its bookmobile. It serves Durham County. In Wake County the bookmobile was purchased for the use of both Negroes and whites. The Richard B. Harrison Public Library uses it 8 school days out of each month and the white library uses it 12 school days. Davidson, Gastonia, Rockingham, Cherokee, and Johnston counties have access to bookmobiles which are served by white librarians.

The following figures show the development of public library service in the past five years:

#### NEGRO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

	1937-38	1942-43
No. of Public Libraries.....	21	30
No. Reporting .....	19	21
Negro Population Being Served .....	234,567	272,685
No. of Books .....	44,785	76,990
Total Circulation .....	185,227	385,959
Average Circulation per Person .....	.78	1.31
Library Expenditures .....	\$16,205.59	\$42,400.48
No. of Librarians with Library Degrees .....	2	3

<sup>1</sup> 8 not reporting.

<sup>2</sup> 2 not reporting.

(Continued on page seven)

# NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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It was through the stimulus of the outstanding February 4-5, 1944 North Carolina Negro Library Association Conference that this all Negro issue of the NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES found its beginnings. Since few librarians outside the North Carolina Negro Library Association could attend this exceptional meeting, the mere essence has been recorded for others here.

The recent acceptance of the North Carolina Negro Library Association membership in the American Library Association deserves mention at this time. The reasons for this acceptance will be obvious as you read the workings of the Association in this issue.

It is the hope of the editors that other articles concerning the Negro libraries will be sent in from time to time.—E.G.

# PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

## Reviewed by

GUY R. LYLE

Woman's College Library, U. N. C.

All good things come in pairs—for instance Helen Bray's *Library Financial Records* (N. Y., Bowker, 1943, \$2) and Edward Wight's *Public Library Finance and Accounting* (Chicago, A. L. A., 1943, \$2.75). The former is strictly a "how" type of book and its simple explanations and numerous "form" reproductions make it a thoroughly practical and useful manual. Edward Wight's book has a broader utility; its purpose lies somewhere between the "how" type and the more extensive treatment required of conventional topics of accounting practice. "The present study," he says, "is an effort to apply some of the general theory of governmental finance and accounting to the public library." Although the book is short, it is explicit and compact, covering such subjects as building the budget, operating the budget, and accounting. The glossary of accounting terminology is a useful feature.

A leading article in the current *American Scholar* (Spring, 1944) is by Dorothy Canfield Fisher and is on the subject of the American reader and books. It raises many interesting points based on Mrs. Fisher's experience as a member of the selection committee of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and we recommend that it be read by all librarians, and by everyone who is interested in books and libraries. Probably every librarian has at one time or another faced the question of buying books which, although they offended the decencies, had undeniable literary merit and similar positive qualities. On this point Mrs. Fisher observes that "The often startling outspokenness of modern books seemed to shock the members of the Committee of Selection [of the Book Club] rather more than it shocks the great mass of modern read-



ers. . . . For the first books of this kind that were sent out, we mentally apologized to our readers. We justified ourselves with the belief that the book was the best one available that month, but we feared a loud explosion of resentful criticism. . . . No explosion took place. . . . A situation shocking in itself but described in decorous language does not seem to offend readers." Mrs. Fisher also discusses the types of books readers seem to enjoy most—a question which interests all of us as librarians.

*The Administration of the American Public Library* by E. W. McDiarmid and John McDiarmid (A. L. A., 1943, \$2.70) will command attention if for no other reason than the fact that there is nothing in print of any currency which covers this field. But the further fact that it is written by a librarian who has made public administration his special field of study and work and by his brother who is a specialist in government and personnel work in the U. S. Civil Service Commission entitles the authors to a full hearing and the respect which this volume deserves. The book deals with the problems involved in organizing and managing public libraries—governmental relations, the place of the board and the executive, the departmental organization of the library, finance, personnel, and planning coordination.

I have not had time to study this book thoroughly for the purpose of a full-dress review. But here are some things that I particularly like about it. The information is based on facts—first-hand study of conditions in large and medium-sized public libraries. The arrangement and organization are practical if not unique in professional writings. The librarian in the medium-sized library, for example, will find here an analysis of organization based on actual studies of a large number of existing situations with definite *recommendations* regarding desirable policies and practices. At no time in their treatment of such practical

problems as budgets and personnel do the authors lose sight of the major objectives of the library. In the relations of the library to the community, the librarian to the board, and the library staff to the chief librarian, a thoroughly democratic philosophy is expressed.

The general question of library publicity receives much attention in the March issue of the *Wilson Library Bulletin*. This is the second annual issue the *Bulletin* has devoted almost exclusively to publicity; the first one proved so successful that readers wanted another. I think separate issues of the *Bulletin* are for sale and the article by Clifford Laube, Day Telegraph Editor of the *New York Times* is worth the price alone. The methods of publicity may not have much to do with literature *per se*, but they are certainly aiming, more or less successfully, to attract people to books; and that's what counts!

#### TAR HEEL LIBRARY NOTES

Some students of the School of Library Service, Atlanta University, did their 1944 library practice work in North Carolina libraries the four weeks of March 6-April 1.

There will be a Workshop for School Librarians at the School of Library Science of the North Carolina College for Negroes, June 9-10; and a Workshop for Public Librarians at Shaw University, June 19-23.

The Colored Public Library, Wilson County Library, Wilson, was opened January 16, 1944, with a dedication service in the local church. Miss Marjorie Beal, Secretary and Director, North Carolina Library Commission; Miss Nancy Gray, Librarian, Wilson County Library; and Mrs. Mollie H. Lee, Librarian, Richard B. Harrison Public Library, Raleigh, took part in the ceremony.

THE CREATIVE FACTORS THAT  
LED TO THE 1942-1943 MAY-  
FLOWER AWARD<sup>1</sup>

By J. SAUNDERS REDDING  
Hampton Institute

Ostensibly I am here tonight to talk about my writing—to talk about *No Day of Triumph*—and I beg your indulgence. To get at my subject, I have to go back three years to the writing of another book called *To Make a Poet Black*. The preparation of that book caused me no end of misery for, while I was working on it, I was bedeviled by a question that seemed to me to grow out of the material. That question had to do with the Negro writer and his working philosophy. It troubled me, but I was afraid to do anything with it for fear it would lead me too far afield. I went on working on the book with my face set against this fascinating topic with the result, I feel now, that *To Make a Poet Black* was only one-third the book it might have been.

Since that time the topic has again risen to plague me. And in a disingenuous and left-handed way, it gave birth to *No Day of Triumph* which, as those who have read it know, does not mention Negro writers *per se* or a writer's working philosophy.

Tonight I think I owe it to myself, and obliquely to you, first to define the terms of that topic, "The Negro Writer and His Working Philosophy." By the term "working philosophy" we mean whatever there is of idea and principle that motivates one's writing; we mean whatever basic concept the writer has of his world and his relation to that world; we mean whatever there is of meaning for the writer in the theory and the fact of life and humanity and of the relations of man to man. For surely it is the sum of all these things that motivates man, and a writer is first man.

Secondly, I think we must understand

the term *Negro*. By Negro we mean any person who through outward circumstance or inner choice has become allied with the colored people in America to the extent of having his societal being among them practically exclusively. Walter White would be one of these though Jean Toomer would not. Ethel Waters would be one of these though Josephine Baker, obviously, would not. But niceness in this matter need not disturb us overmuch for, in America at the present time, all colored writers who perhaps are worth talking about are Negro writers, though there are some of them who do not admit it.

Now this complex of things that make up a writer's working philosophy—values both human and artistic—may be neatly bundled into one concept, one word. It may be nihilism or socialism, orthodoxy, skepticism or agnosticism, communism or republicanism. The point I wish to make is that some background of firm belief in *something* is necessary to vital work. It is important only that the writer's belief be solidly grounded in his humanity, his human-ness. I heard a well-known writer say recently that it is enough for the writer to live with his artistic vision. But it is not enough, for no book can be written out of artistic imagination alone. Art must be purposeful beyond the limits of the purely esthetic. Art for art's sake is the greatest vice of the decadents.

There are those fortunate people who arrive at certainties, who arrive at absolutes instinctively. They are of that illustrious band who need no conversion—they become the saints and the mediators of spiritual and social religions. Then there are others who arrive at certainties through conscious seeking along the way of need: Bunyan, Gandhi, James Weldon Johnson, a handful of white men in our country. Then there is a third group (and I was one of these) who, wise in their own conceit, think that instinct is false or dead or barbarian al-

<sup>1</sup> Dinner address, North Carolina Negro Library Association, February 5, 1944.

together and feel that the path of need is non-existent. They have, they think, tried it all, seen it all, felt it all. An admission of lack seems to them a weakness, and they hate weakness. And so they go on, empty, hysterically buoyant, hysterically reactive, hysterically omniscient, and totally dead.

It was the cumulative result of long years of the wrong kind of things: long years of the wrong kind of hopes, desires, ambitions; long years of inbred middle-class ideology founded on values that had no great pertinency to human vitality; long years of the wrong kind of education—of civics that did not civilize in the universal sense of the word, history that went from the truth of fact to the unacceptable lie of interpretation, history that was neither democratic, thus enlarging one's soul and freeing one's flood of sympathetic understanding of other men, nor unbiased, thus helping to make clear man's fundamental relation to man; the pseudo-science of sociology and politics; the carefully chosen, scrupulously edited works of the great men of letters.

It was this blind alley into which I had walked open-eyed by the time I thought I'd like to write another book. I was at the point of jotting down notes when I fully realized where I was and that there was nothing before me but a high wall of frustration—and almost nothing, absolutely nothing behind. Then my hand was forced by the kindest fate that ever struck.

Out of the blue there came an assignment, a "dream assignment," Arna Bonetemps has called it. "Here's some money," I was told. "Go travel through the South, talk to anybody who'll talk, take in as much experience as you can, and write a book about it." No restrictions were put upon the assignment—and, as I thought then, no hampering suggestions were to be made upon the book. But the assignment was not so simple as that; I brooded over it for six weeks.

I read history and sociology—Howard Odum, Charles Johnson, Virginius Dabney, and hosts of others for six months after that. And then, a little over a month before I was to set out, it occurred to me that I was again on the wrong track. What in the name of heaven was the sense in my setting out to do what others had done so much better? What was I after? What was the book to be about? About the false concepts of race and region? A thing of morbidity, rates and crop acreages, of taxes and delinquency? And then, suddenly, I knew it was to be about none of these: I knew suddenly, one night, that it was to be an intensely personal book—a book which I hoped would lead me out of my confusion. In that month before the journey started I outlined the first section and wrote three thousand words of it. A year and a half later the travel was done and the final draft of *No Day of Triumph* was completed. And I think between January of 1940 and January of 1942 I had at least found the road that leads somewhere. I had, I think, discovered humanity.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF NEGRO LIBRARIES IN NORTH CAROLINA

(Continued from page three)

There has been some development noted in public library facilities and perhaps more in this state than any other Southern state. The above figures reveal, however, that library facilities for Negroes are far from being adequate. Although nearly 1/3 of the Negro population in the state have access to library service, there are not enough libraries, book collections are far too small, physical arrangements and equipment are generally poor, and there are too few trained librarians. These can be largely remedied through enlarged appropriations, community interest in the establishment of libraries and the appointment of a state Negro library adviser.

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEGRO COLLEGE LIBRARY IN NORTH CAROLINA

By PAREPA WATSON

*N. C. College for Negroes*

1917

Actuated by the fact that "the effective education of the Negroes of the United States is essential to the welfare of the entire nation, and especially the Southern States," the U. S. Bureau of Education published in 1917 a rather exhaustive survey of the educational opportunities offered to the Negro through the then existent schools.

At that time, only three of the present Negro colleges in North Carolina were included among the thirty-three schools of the nation classified as institutions of higher education for Negroes. "It was only under a liberal interpretation of college work that, of the 653 private and state schools studied, the thirty-three were selected as teaching any subjects of college grade. Hardly a college met the standards set by the Carnegie Foundation and the North Central Association." No one of the three schools of North Carolina was ranked as an outright "college." One is listed under "secondary and college," and two are listed as offering "college subjects."

The investigation of library facilities was incidental to this study, probably because such facilities were few and meager. Of the 653 private and higher schools described, only twenty-seven were known to have a collection of books that on the most liberal interpretation could be called a library. Only eleven of the twenty-seven were known to have a fair collection of books, arranged and managed so as to contribute to the education of the pupils. The libraries in practically all the other schools were described as "so unsuitable as to be almost worthless, the discarded refuse of garrets and over-crowded storerooms, which should have gone to the paper mill,

but was sent to these poor children through mistaken kindness."

The three so-called colleges in North Carolina were probably a little better off than most, inasmuch as two of the schools are reported to have had Carnegie library buildings on their campuses at the time of the survey.

1927

Passing over a period of ten years, we find that this 1917 report on Negro education in the United States was credited with having contributed so greatly to the tremendous reconstruction of schools for Negroes that a resurvey was arranged by the Commissioner of Education in 1927. This second survey differed from the first in that it was limited to a survey of colleges and universities only, while the first had included secondary and elementary schools as well.

Of the seventy-nine institutions included in the 1927 survey, seventy-seven were engaged in college work. Twelve of the seventy-seven colleges were located in North Carolina, an increase of nine over the number reported ten years previously. Two of these twelve colleges have since gone out of existence, but two have been added, so that at the present time there are still twelve Negro colleges in North Carolina.

For each of the colleges studied in this report, some consideration was given to the library under the heading "Educational Equipment." While the facts revealed show that library facilities were still inadequate, advancement had certainly been made from a state of practically nothing in the first report to that of a good beginning.

The progress of the Negro college library in North Carolina for this ten year period is notable. One of the colleges, now no longer functioning, had 1,000 volumes in its collection, while the library of one of the three colleges included in the 1917 report could boast of having more than 13,500 volumes on its shelves.



The aggregate number of some 62,000 volumes for the twelve colleges, however, was little more than the minimum number of volumes now suggested by most rating agencies as necessary for the library of a single college. The average number of books for each college was approximately 5,000 volumes.

By this time, the number of colleges with a separate library building had increased from only two to four. The libraries of the other colleges, housed in either one or two rooms, were generally described as inadequate and uninviting. In view of the fact that nine of these institutions had not existed as colleges ten years previously, one or two rooms as library quarters must be accepted as a progressive step.

Ten of these twelve libraries were under the supervision of a full-time librarian. Of the two remaining, one was in charge of a member of the faculty, while the other was serviced entirely by students. What preparation for performing the job of librarian the ten full-time librarians had had beyond that of the faculty member is difficult to determine from the report. Only in one case was the librarian spoken of as a graduate of a library school. The others, however, were described as being trained, or partly trained. It is generally known that when the Hampton Library School was established in 1925, there was but one Negro graduate of a library school in the entire country. The Hampton school had been functioning for only one year when the statistics were gathered for this report. The training of the librarians when spoken of, therefore, no doubt referred to their college degrees. However, to have full-time college trained personnel responsible for the services of the library was a long step forward from the situation as it existed in 1917.

To round out the picture since the figures are available, a word or two about the budgets should prove of interest. In-

cluding the spending for books, binding, supplies, and salaries, the largest amount spent by any one library was \$4,180. One library spent nothing. The total amount spent for all twelve of the libraries was \$21,854, or an average of \$1,821.

#### 1943

The Bureau of Education survey of 1927 gave an even greater impetus to the development of the Negro college than did that of 1917. The library, having been brought into focus as a necessary educational tool, shared in the accelerated growth. The influence of trained librarians, primarily graduates of the Hampton Library School, became evident in the organization and usefulness of the book resources of every school.

Another factor, which doubtless equaled in influence the effect of both the 1927 survey and that of the trained librarians, was the rating of Negro colleges begun in 1930 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The colleges in North Carolina were as anxious as any to attain the rating requirements of this association. The special emphasis placed upon certain standards for the library was a challenge with teeth in it. In meeting these requirements, the five state controlled colleges, and perhaps to a lesser degree, the seven privately controlled schools, enjoyed the constant support of the State Department of Public Instruction. Later, in 1939, four of the twelve colleges received grants from the Carnegie Corporation for the purchase of books.

At the present time, every college save one, has been accredited by the Southern Association with either a "B" or an "A" rating. This means that in proportion to the number of students to be served, the number of volumes in each library is close to being adequate. The collections now range from a little more than 6,000 volumes in the smallest library to ap-

proximately 40,000 volumes in the largest. Collectively, these twelve libraries now offer to the students of the Negro colleges in North Carolina more than 214,000 volumes—almost four times as many books as were available through these same libraries in 1927.

Separate library buildings have now increased from four to eight. Libraries not having separate buildings have quarters arranged especially to accommodate their needs, usually the space of an entire floor in the main building of the campus. Even the separate buildings, however, are already becoming crowded and inadequate. With one exception, these libraries are under the administration of at least one full-time, professionally trained librarian.

While the progress made in so short a time by Negro college libraries in general, as well as by those in North Carolina, has been spoken of as a little less than miraculous, it would be misleading indeed to end this account on too bright a note.

In 1942, the U. S. Office of Education published a third national survey of the higher education of Negroes. The summary of the chapter devoted to the study of the libraries in general is equally applicable to the libraries of the colleges in North Carolina: "The libraries at the Negro institutions of higher education, when taken as a whole, are inadequate for the service which they should perform. There are a few libraries which compare favorably in book collections, personnel, finances and building with the good libraries of other groups of institutions; but the vast majority of the Negro college libraries are weak in all these elements. Book collections of 15,000 volumes, book budgets of \$4,000, salary budgets of \$3,000, staff of two or three workers, and one-room libraries do not provide the service needed by colleges and universities. . . . To enable them to function adequately, these libraries need increased funds for books,

personnel and equipment, and capital outlays for the improvement of the quarters in which most of them are now housed, or for the construction of new quarters."

The influence of the library, as it now stands, on the higher education for the Negro in North Carolina has been felt and recognized. It is to be hoped that its future development will be of such nature as to turn this influence into an impact.

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#### THE GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Has scheduled for librarians: *The Public Library After the War*, July 31 to August 19; *Institute on Library Extension*, August 21 to 26; *Larger Units of Library Service*, August 21 to September 9.

## BUILDING A BETTER WORLD THROUGH BOOKS

By CHARLEMAE ROLLINS

*George C. Hall Branch Library, Chicago*

It is important to have books show all phases of Negro life in order that young people may get a well-rounded picture of the Negro but it is also important for young people to become accustomed to the Negro not as a separate unit of America but as a real part of the whole pattern. An outstanding example of such a book is Robert Lawson's *Watchwords of Liberty*, a pageant of quotations from the sayings of the great men of American history beginning with William Bradford and including Booker T. Washington.

*Submarine Sailor* by Gregor Felsen is a modern story of submarine warfare. One of the minor characters in the story is a Negro member of the crew, not the kind of character usually found in light fiction, not a naïve, superstitious, happy-go-lucky creature, but a hero who, along with the other members of the crew, risks his life for his country! This book may not be an important literary contribution but it will help create among white children a new respect for all Negroes.

*On the Dark of the Moon* by Don Long is primarily an animal story but it presents in appealing fashion a little Negro boy's love for two pet raccoons. It shows the 'coon hunters of the South and their enthusiasm for the sport. Any child who loves animals will feel a kinship with Siddy who loved the pets in this story.

Katherine Pollock has done a fine job in presenting a wholesomely humorous story of Trinidad in *Sly Mongoose*. This is excellent for reading aloud. *Children of North Africa* by Louise Stinetorf is a collection of short stories about the native children of Africa, white and black.

Illustrations which play such an important role in all children's books are

particularly important in children's books on the Negro. Objections most often heard are: "They caricature the children," "The pictures are not true to Negro child life," "They present only the pickaninnies." These criticisms and others justifiably presented to publishers and illustrators over a period of years are now at last bearing fruit. Producers of children's books were not aware that certain types of books ridiculed the Negro children and made them self-conscious and often ashamed of their race. Publishers now are anxious to present only the best in books about all children. It is evident that the illustrations in the 1943 books are pointing toward democracy. The end papers in Robert Lawson's *Watchwords of Liberty* are very striking. The artist presents a group of American children saluting the flag and in the front row is a little black boy not caricatured nor pictured with red lips. *Small Rain* illustrated by Elizabeth Orton Jones is perhaps the most appealing of all the picture books for little children in 1943 as far as the Negro child is concerned. It is a collection of Bible verses illustrated with a group of children in various activities of childhood. A little black boy is included in the various groups at play. He is found doing all the things that the other children do, naturally, realistically, and without any self-consciousness or restraint, just a part of the group. These may seem slight indications of progress when considered separately, but when viewed as a part of the whole pattern of modern children's literature, they are indeed significant.

Our next step lies in the subject fields. American history textbooks should include, along with the regrettable incidents of the Reconstruction, at least some of the contributions of the Negro. It is encouraging to find many of the new anthologies of poetry including Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and Paul Lawrence Dunbar. All the children's collections of American scientists now include

Dr. Carver; there is still a need for the inclusion of Benjamin Bannaker, Ernest Just and others. As no history of American music can be complete without the Negro's music, no history of American literature, should omit Phillis Wheatley, William Stanley Braithwait, W. E. B. DuBois or other representative Negro writers.

Now that writers, publishers, editors, and illustrators are aware that a vital phase of democracy has to do with the Negro and are pointing their books in that direction, parents, teachers, and others are faced with the responsibility of seeing that these books are introduced to the young people. They should be placed on all important book lists for those who do not have access to the books. They should be put in all school and library collections and requested from public libraries where these facilities exist. Suggestions from teachers and others should be sent to publishers and editors along with letters of commendation to writers who have the courage to produce books which we are proud to give our youth.

Young people are expected to build this "Brave New World" of tomorrow. If it is to be the *real* democracy for which we hope we are fighting, it must be built on an intelligent understanding of each other today.

### READING INTERESTS OF SOLDIERS<sup>1</sup>

By KATHRYN M. PENN  
*Camp Sutton*

Contrary to popular belief reading interests of soldiers lean more heavily toward non-fiction than fiction. The thirst for knowledge that characterized our men before they entered the armed forces follows them into the various camps and demands satisfaction.

The types of books desired most de-

pend largely upon the kind of camp and the type of training that is being offered. In Camp Sutton, North Carolina books on engineering—construction, surveying, drafting, demolition—are first in demand with mathematics, physics, and foreign languages playing a close second. The urge seems to be for knowledge and more knowledge. As a response to this search for self-improvement the library offers special information on the educational opportunities provided by the government. The United States Armed Forces Institute gives self-instruction through correspondence courses for those men who wish to complete their high school and college education. Mathematics and foreign language classes are held by capable instructors in libraries, service clubs, and recreation halls. Orientation centers, featuring material given to the libraries by our Morale Branch, always draw a large crowd and create controversial comments on "Why We Fight."

Books by and about the Negro receive more than the expected amount of interest from our Negro soldiers and new books on this subject create minor stampedes at the circulation desk.

In the line of fiction mysteries and westerns still prove to be a relaxing factor; historical novels and standard classics are read almost as avidly. But, please, nothing about the war.

### Two Outstanding Novels

#### BEING MET TOGETHER

*by Vaughan Wilkins*

A new novel by the author of  
*And So—Victoria*

#### THE RED COCK CROWS

*by Frances Gaither*

An exciting novel of the old South

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
500 Spring Street, Atlanta, Ga.

<sup>1</sup>Address, Public and Camp Libraries, North Carolina Negro Library Association, February 4, 1944.