

North Carolina Negro Library Association*

by Mollie Huston Lee

The North Carolina Negro Library Association, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in Wilson, on November 5-6, 1954, had its beginning at Shaw University. The librarian at this institution felt that there was a very definite need for some type of organization which would give encouragement and stimulation to Negroes in a field which was comparatively new to them. Letters were sent to all available librarians 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.

On the committee to make arrangements for the first meeting on April 20-21, 1934 were Miss Marjorie Shepard, Librarian, North Carolina College for Negroes; Miss Pearl Snodgrass, Librarian, St. Augustine's

College; Miss Marjorie Beal, Secretary and Director, North Carolina Library Commission; Miss Jeanette Hicks, Librarian, Washington High School, Raleigh; and Miss Mollie H. Huston (Mrs. James S. Lee) Librarian, Shaw University.

At this meeting there were twenty-three school, college and public librarians present as compared to an approximate membership of 225 today. Of this number five had bachelor's degrees in library science, one a master's degree and the others some or little professional training. The charter members present were:

Miss Florence Byrd, Miss Mollie Dunlap, Miss Corese Eaton, Mrs. Mary Eaton, Mrs. Octavia Ford, Miss Estelle Grayson, Mrs. Mary M. Hairston, Miss Clarice Hall, Miss Victoria Hawkins, Mrs. Irene Hendericks, Miss Jeanette Hicks, Miss Mollie H. Huston, Mrs. Mozelle Lane, Miss D.L. LeBoo, Miss Alma Morrow, Mrs. Robert Ransom, Miss Louise Russell, Miss Janie Mae Shelton, Miss Marjorie Shepard, Mrs. Josephine Sherrill, Miss Pearl

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Snodgrass, Miss Martha A. White, Mrs. B.B. Underwood.

Speakers on the 21st were Miss Janie Mae Shelton, Librarian, Elizabeth City State Teachers College, who spoke on "The Library in the School;" Miss Nora Beust, Professor of Children's Literature at the University of North Carolina on "Children's Literature;" and Miss Mollie H. Huston, on "Instruction in the Use of Books." Time was allowed for a Roundtable "discussion" where various problems confronting the librarians could be discussed.

Although Mrs. Mary P. Douglas, State School Library Advisor, was not on the formal program, she gave valuable suggestions throughout the meeting. She was so enthusiastic about the conference that she purchased volumes of poetry and gave them to those present. It was during the business sessions, that the small group of members discussed with great zeal the possibility of an organization. It was a known fact that Negroes could not hold membership in the North Carolina Library Association. In spite of this, it was felt that nothing should stand in the way of their professional growth. If this meant a separate organization, then there should be one and hope for unity soon. Thus the North Carolina Negro Library Association became the first Negro Library Association in the country.

Considerable thought was given to the objectives which such an organization should have. The main objectives were to improve libraries for service to all the people and to encourage the professional growth of its members. By attending the meetings and holding membership in

the association the group hoped that members would benefit from:

- Getting to know others in their field and cultivating lasting friendships.
- Exchanging ideas and experiences.
- Having an opportunity to hear and meet outstanding authors and professional authorities.
- Holding offices, serving on committees and planning conferences, thus affording an opportunity for leadership training.
- Pursuing research and contributing to professional periodicals.
- Socializing, which is important for good comradeship.

At the closing meeting the following officers were elected: Miss Mollie E. Dunlap, Vice-President; Mrs. Josephine P. Sherrill, Secretary; and Miss Pearl Snodgrass, Treasurer.

The second annual meeting was held at St. Augustine's College on April 5-6, 1935. Guest speakers during this meeting were Miss Charlotte Templeton, Librarian at Atlanta University who spoke on "The Library at Atlanta University," and Mr. John E. Bowen, Jr., C.C.C. Educational Advisor on "Two Experiments in Adult Education for Negroes." Miss Florence R. Curtis, Director of the Hampton Library School was a visitor and gave a brief talk.

At this meeting, Miss Florence Byrd (Mrs. Murray Davis), chairman of the Constitution committee, made her report on the constitution. At the request of Miss Bertie Sorrell, a reference librarian at Tuskegee Institute, and a visitor, the membership was opened to librarians in other states. After a discussion and recommendations, the constitution was adopted.

During this meeting the members

expressed a need for some type of an official publication. This would serve as a medium of communication for the officers and the membership. It would encourage research and provide items of interest relative to the activities of librarians and libraries in the state. The association voted that there should be published quarterly some type of publication. Miss Florence Byrd was appointed Publication chairman.

Attendance had grown to 31, with 13 of the charter members being present.

The third annual meeting was held at Winston-Salem Teachers College on April 3-4, 1936. For the first time, the conference was divided into groups so that the various branches of the profession might discuss their problems. Guest speakers were Mr. Arthur A. Schomburg, Curator, 135th Street Branch Public Library, New York City, who spoke twice, first on "Cradle Books of Negro Literature," and second at a public meeting on "The Great Negro Painters of Europe." Miss Susan Grey Akers, Director of the School of Library Science at the University of North Carolina, spoke on "How Much Classification and Cataloging is Essential for the Small Library."

Miss Charlotte Lytle, Librarian, Second Ward High School, Charlotte, presided at the fourth annual conference at Fayetteville State Normal School as second president of the association. This meeting was held on April 2-3, 1937. Keynote speakers were Mrs. Dorothy R. Homer, Librarian, Miner Teachers College, Washington, D.C. who spoke at the banquet on the "The Library," and Dr. Alain LeRoy Locke, writer and head of

the Department of Philosophy of Howard University spoke at the Friday evening public meeting on "The Cultural Side of Life and the Place of Adult Education in Promoting Culture." At the Saturday morning meeting, Mr. Guy R. Lyle, Librarian, Woman's College of the University of North Carolina spoke on "Some Basic Principles of Library Publicity."

The program of the association was being hampered because dues were small. It was voted that the dues be increased from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per year. In recognition of the low salaries being paid librarians at this time, and to encourage attendance, room, luncheon and the banquet at each meeting were given members without charge. The expenses of the keynote speakers were shared by the host college, thus affording the members opportunity to hear outstanding persons without much cost to the association.

The *LIBRARIAN*, a mimeographed newsletter, put in its first appearance November 17, 1937. Miss Alois Francis, librarian of Shaw University was editor. It contained a letter from newly elected President Hazel C. Edwards, the constitution, a short history of the association, interesting facts about librarians and an inspirational note from the editor. Only two issues were published.

At the fifth annual meeting on April 1-2, 1938 at North Carolina College for Negroes, the association began to know that its presence in the state was being felt. President Hazel C. Edwards was confronted with a number of controversial issues. During Dr. James E. Shepard's welcome speech at the conference, he invited the N.C.N.L.A.

to become a member of the North Carolina Negro Teachers Association. This came not as a surprise to some because an undercover campaign had been going on for sometime to get the N.C.N.L.A. to merge with the Teachers Association. This would, of course, add members and increase the financial support of the Teachers Association, but would also curtail the time allowed for the program of the librarians. This provoked heated discussions at the first business session because there were strong forces for and against the merger. A motion was finally made by Mr. John E. Bowen, Jr. and seconded by Mrs. Mollie H. Lee that the N.C.N.L.A. remain an independent organization. The motion was carried. Not satisfied, the losing side requested that a committee be appointed to talk with officials of the North Carolina Negro Teachers Association to discuss advantages of a merger at a future time.

At the Friday afternoon meeting, micro-photography was presented at the conference for the first time. Mr. W.W. Smiley of the University of North Carolina gave a very interesting demonstration. Dr. Carter G. Woodson, historian of Washington, D.C., spoke at the banquet Friday evening on "The History of this Country, Including Our History," and Mrs. Mary P. Douglas, spoke Saturday morning on "Tools Joy-Books."

At the afternoon business meetings, considerable stress was put on ways to recruit new members into the association. In view of the fact that more positions were being filled by trained librarians, statistics showed that a larger percentage of them were

not members of the association.

Livingstone College served as host to the sixth annual conference on March 31 and April 1, 1939. Dr. Rufus E. Clement, President of Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia, was the banquet speaker. Having been a former teacher at Livingstone College and having a wife who was a former North Carolina librarian, he gave a practical and informative speech on the "Responsibility of the Librarian for Educating the Faculty and Library Board." Dr. Carl M. White, Librarian of the University of North Carolina, ended the conference with a paper on "The Librarian as Educator."

President D. Eric Moore, in his address to the conference on Saturday morning, suggested that the members now should think in terms of more professional growth. With this in mind, he suggested further that publications from other library associations should be requested for examination and that membership in the American Library Association is as important as membership in the N.C.N.L.A. Likewise, he felt that there were enough librarians now in North Carolina for the association to publish a Who's Who among North Carolina Libraries. Following this suggestion, Mrs. Mary H. Hairston was made chairman of the committee to prepare the Who's Who.

Mrs. Florence Curtis watched with great interest the development of the association, especially since a larger percentage of the membership was composed of Hampton Institute Library School graduates. A letter was read from her in which she made helpful suggestions: first, that each

librarian should plan methods of getting support from the community, P.T.A. and faculties in order to strengthen their program; second, that there should be more frequent meetings of the association or sectional meetings held to encourage the exchange of ideas. In recognition of her contributions in the field of librarianship, and especially her encouragement of Negroes in the profession, the conference voted to send her a telegram at Bennett College, April 15, 1940 when a conference would be held honoring her. Telegrams were also to be sent on April 16, 1940, to Bennett and Talladega Colleges congratulating them on the dedication of their new libraries.

Two well qualified Negro librarians were the guest speakers at the Seventh Annual Conference in Rocky Mount, April 5-6, 1940. Miss Marguerite Lovell, Instructor of Library Science, North Carolina College for Negroes, spoke on "Make a Man Healthy, Wealthy and Wise:" and Mr. James H. Hulbert, Librarian, Virginia State College, spoke on "Social Implications for a Dynamic Library." At the conference dinner, Mr. J. Saunders Redding, author, and Professor of English at Elizabeth City State Teachers College read a very scholarly paper on Negro literature.

At this meeting the association continued to show evidence of growth. Membership was increasing, also there were lively discussions in the sectional meetings and thoughts were being focused more and more on the association's responsibility toward expanding and improving library service in North Carolina.

The *Handbook*, which gave facts about the association for the period 1934-39, was distributed to the members. It included the constitution and by-laws of the association; a list of facts about Negro college, school and public libraries; a list of North Carolina Negro librarians and members of the association, charter and deceased members; the number of bookmobiles in the State serving Negroes; and names of keynote speakers at association meetings. This mimeographed publication was compiled by Mrs. Mary M. Hairston, chairman, and Miss E. Beatrice Riggs (Mrs. L. H. Hall) and Miss E.F. Elliot.

Mr. John E. Bowen, Jr. was one of the most colorful presidents the association ever had. From the day he was elected president at the 1940 meeting, until his death, members were very conscious that they had elected a live, library-minded president.

He had a flair for writing memos and newsy letters to the members. He liked nothing better than calling committee meetings and traveling around the state visiting librarians. In one communication he said: "It has been my desire to visit more of you and I hope that you have visited each other—this is a good opportunity to be sociable and invite members to book-teas on the lawn. We can thereby put over our program; discuss library problems; then learn to know and love one another. May I have an invitation? I might be able to come."

In using his pet expression "rethinking the association," he would be bubbling over with ideas, projects and programs which would be impossible for the association to

accomplish in the short period allowed for them.

In his address to the Eighth Annual meeting which met at Johnson C. Smith University on October 24-25, 1941, he made some recommendations which were pertinent to the future growth of the association. He suggested that in order to settle the question of the merger of the N.C.N.L.A. with the North Carolina Negro Teachers Association once and for all, there should be a library section established in the Teachers Association. This would enable the two organizations to become affiliated organizations in carrying out mutual objectives and educational pursuits of common interest. The N.C.N.L.A. would accept sponsorship of this library section and concentrate on activities which would be of interest to school librarians. This recommendation was approved by the association, and Miss E. Beatrice Riggs was appointed chairman of the Program planning committee.

Mr. Bowen further recommended the appointment of an executive secretary by the executive committee. A gratuity would be given to this person until a salary could be paid. The business of the association had grown to the extent that an office of this type could serve as a clearing house and dispense with routine matters more quickly.

It could well be said that foremost in his thinking was affiliation with the American Library Association. He believed that it was the duty of all librarians to hold membership in its national association. He further believed that the N.C.N.L.A. should be

a chapter of ALA and for this he worked very hard.

During this meeting, an appropriation was made to Mr. A.P. Marshall, Librarian at Winston-Salem Teachers College, to enable him to continue the compilation of a *Guide to Negro Periodical Literature*. Volume one of this author and subject index of 19 periodicals was published first by him independently. Volume Two, Nos. 1 and 2 were issued in 1942. Early in 1943, Mr. Marshall was inducted into the armed forces and the next issue did not appear until 1946.

During some of the war years, transportation was being curtailed, and there was a question as to whether annual meetings would be advisable. In order to keep interest alive, district meetings were suggested. For some reason district meetings were never held and no annual meetings planned during the years 1942 and 1943. During that time, however, the executive committee had several meetings.

In 1942, President James E. Shepard wrote Mr. Bowen that he had granted N.C.N.L.A. permission to establish official headquarters at North Carolina College for Negroes. This was a forward movement in concentrating the resources of this educational organization at an institution where they could be available and preserved.

Practically most of the months of Mr. Bowen's second term were devoted to getting the association admitted as a chapter of the ALA and securing 50 paid ALA members to qualify for the privilege of electing a councilor to the ALA council from this chapter. Unfortunately, Mr. Bowen

died February 21, 1943, without knowing that his dream had become a reality, for on February 1, 1943, the ALA council had voted to establish the N.C.N.L.A. as a chapter of the ALA. This was the first Negro Library Association to be admitted.

During the year 1943, the association was dangling without leadership. The organization began to show some concern as to what was going to happen to the association. No plans were in the making to hold another annual meeting and it was felt that since the association had given impetus to the progress of so many librarians in the state it should not be allowed to die. Questionnaires were sent to members of the executive committee to get their opinions regarding an annual meeting to be scheduled for early in 1944. The replies were enthusiastic and with a budget of \$29.35, the planning committee, which was composed of Miss Thelma Nelson, Miss Pearl Snodgrass, Miss E. Beatrice Riggs, Mrs. Mollie H. Lee and Mr. D. Eric Moore, worked toward having a meeting in Raleigh at St. Augustine's College and Shaw University, February 4-5, 1944.

Mr. Moore was acting president for this Tenth Annual meeting. In spite of the limited budget, the committee undertook an ambitious program by inviting outstanding speakers. They were praying for weather free from snow and sleet, and for a large attendance to assure the collection of enough dues to take care of the expenses which had been incurred. Their prayers were more than answered.

The Honorable Graham H. Andrews, Mayor of Raleigh, welcomed the librarians to the city. Miss Ernestine Grafton, Tri-County librarian (Person County) and editor of *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES* spoke at the Public Library Section on "The Extension Program in North Carolina." Mr. J. Saunders Redding, author and professor of English, Hampton Institute, and a recent winner of the Mayflower Cup Award, spoke at the banquet on "The Creative Factors that Led to the Mayflower Award." At the banquet, Mrs. Mollie H. Lee was presented a basket of flowers in recognition of her work in founding the association.

At the Saturday morning meeting, Dr. Susan G. Akers spoke on the subject "Really Simplified Cataloging." This speech was later mailed to members for future reference. Following Dr. Akers' speech, a panel was held entitled "The Library Advertises Through: Book Reviewing, Book Parties, Publicity and Displays; the Layman's View." The subdivisions of this general title were discussed in the order of their position in the title. The participants were Dr. John H. Franklin, Miss Thelma Nelson, Mrs. Bettie B. Preer, and Mrs. Cecil Halliburton. Mrs. Charlemae Rollins, author, Children's Librarian, George Cleveland Hall Public Library, Chicago, Illinois closed the conference by speaking on "Building a Better World Through Books." Reprints of her article, "Children's Books on the Negro: To Help Build a Better World," *ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW*, October, 1943, were mailed to members of the association.

Dr. Louis R. Wilson, Founder of N.C.L.A., and former Librarian of the University of North Carolina was recognized in the audience and was asked to say a few words. He congratulated the association on the splendid meeting and felt that the program of the association could go far in helping people especially during this difficult period.

Public library facilities for Negroes experienced tremendous growth during the five year period 1938 to 1943. This was due largely to the WPA library program, state aid to public libraries, community pride and interest, and a library commission which had enthusiastically encouraged the establishment of libraries. To enable closer supervision and to provide professional assistance to those libraries which employed mostly untrained librarians, a Negro state public library supervisor was needed. With this in mind, the association at its Saturday morning business meeting, voted to write the North Carolina Library Commission asking that such a person be employed.

Attendance at this meeting was one of the largest in the history of the association. Everyone left with a feeling that they had gained valuable information. Because of this, an all Negro issue of *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES* was published in May, 1944.

Another meeting was also held in 1944. This second meeting was the Eleventh Annual Conference, held October 27-28, 1944 with Miss E. Beatrice Riggs presiding as president. Miss Eva M. Glass, Instructor, School of Library Science, North Carolina

College for Negroes read a paper at the opening meeting on "Will Librarianship Face the Challenge of the Post-War World?" At the conference banquet the guest speaker was Mr. Arna Bontemps, author and librarian of Fisk University, who spoke on "Adventures in Authorship." Following the banquet, the conference joined with the Carnegie Negro Library in the celebration of its Twentieth Anniversary. Tribute was paid to Mrs. Martha Sebastian for her long years of service at the library. Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, President of Palmer Memorial Institute was the main speaker for the Saturday morning meeting.

At the last meeting of the association in Raleigh, Mrs. Dorothy Manley, Acting Executive Secretary, suggested that there should be a trustee section in the association. There were still a number of public libraries which were independent and had trustee boards which dictated the policies of the library. Most of the others had committees that stimulated interest in their libraries and made recommendations but had no official power. It was believed that a section of this type would serve a useful purpose in helping to enlighten these people in library trends. The association approved the idea and trustees were invited to attend this meeting at Bennett College for the purpose of organizing a section. Mrs. Alma Dowdy, Treasurer of the I.B. Turner Public Library in Washington, was elected chairman.

At the executive meeting held April 7, 1945, Miss Thelma Nelson was elected executive secretary. Miss

Marjorie Beal was present at this meeting to explain the aims and functions of the Library Development Fund and its program. It was being sponsored by the ALA for the purpose of maintaining a library representative in Washington and to carry on a national public relations program supporting the development of good library service for all citizens. President Riggs gave the project her full support and asked each member to give 4 per cent of his month's salary. This request did not materialize, but the members did contribute \$501.15.

Since the constitution made no provisions for filling the position of councilor on the ALA council, President Riggs, with the approval of the executive committee, appointed Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee as councilor representing the N.C.N.L.A. chapter. Her term expired in 1949.

It was during Miss Nelson's term as executive secretary in 1945 that the *NEWSLETTER* was published. It gave interesting items regarding activities of the librarians, projects of the association, messages from the president and business of the executive committee.

In this same year, a request from the association was made to Governor Gregg Cherry to use his influence in employing a Negro School Library supervisor in the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction. His reply was as follows: "Acknowledgement is made of your letter of February 26, and I am not advised as to the change in the Department of Public Instruction with reference to library supervisors. I am glad to have your thoughts on the

matter." At this writing no Negro supervisor has been employed.

The Twelfth Annual meeting was held at Winston-Salem Teachers College November 1-2, 1946. Dr. Rayford W. Logan, author and professor of History at Howard University, spoke at the public meeting on "Education for World Citizenship." Dr. Virginia Jones, Director of the Atlanta University School of Library Service, was the banquet speaker. Her subject was devoted to facts concerning opportunities in the library field. Miss Elizabeth Tarry, a recent employee of Harper & Brothers Publishers spoke at the banquet also on the subject, "An Approach to Understanding Through Children's Books." Miss Dorothy Williams, Dean of the School of Library Science at North Carolina College for Negroes was presented at the Saturday morning session and talked briefly on recruiting and the Wheeler Report.

At the business meeting, the recommendations of the ALA concerning the new salary scale for librarians was read. The association voted to send copies of these recommendations to all Negro College presidents and principals, and also to chairmen of trustee boards and superintendents of county and city school systems.

To encourage librarians in their profession, it was voted that awards should be given to librarians at the annual meetings for worthwhile articles written and published during the year and for sponsoring outstanding library projects. The

research committee was instructed to keep the membership informed of recent federal and state legislation concerning libraries and librarians.

At the next executive committee meeting Miss Penny Perry, Second Ward High School, was appointed executive secretary.

As a result of the request made by the association in 1944 for a Negro State Public Library Supervisor in the North Carolina Library Commission, Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee was offered the position in 1946, but could only accept it on a part-time basis. This position terminated in 1953, and has not since been filled by a Negro.

The Thirteenth Annual Conference was held at the Williston Industrial School, Wilmington, October 31 - November 1, 1947, with President Thelma Nelson presiding. Mr. P. Bernard Young, Editor of the *JOURNAL AND GUIDE* was guest speaker for the public meeting. He spoke on "Newspapers in the World of Tomorrow." The banquet speaker was Miss Shirley Graham, author, who spoke on "The Writers Role as the Voice of the People." Saturday morning, Mr. Joseph L. Reason, Librarian of Howard University, spoke on "The Librarian Selects Books in the World of Tomorrow."

It was June, 1948, under the able editorship of Mr. A.P. Marshall, that the first issue of the *LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW*, first official organ of the association, put in its appearance. The purpose of this organ was, "to bring to

those in library service an organ of exchange, not only for those who are practicing librarianship in North Carolina, but any section of the country, particularly in the Southern States. It is to furnish librarians with a medium of exchange of ideas, an outlet for expression along the lines which they are most interested." In November, 1948, the second issue was published. Soon after that, Mr. Marshall left the state and Mr. D. Eric Moore was appointed editor and Miss Evelyn Pope business manager.

The Fifteenth Annual Conference convened November 5-6, 1948 at William Penn High School, High Point, North Carolina. Dr. William Stuart Nelson, Dean of the School of Religion, Howard University spoke at the public meeting on "Books, Human Understanding and Freedom." Mention was made that it was during the administration of Dr. Nelson at Shaw University that the association received helpful guidance in getting organized. The banquet speaker was Miss Marion Cuthbert, Department of Personnel Service, Brooklyn College, who spoke on "Reading Tastes as an Index of Current Social Thinking."

At this meeting members began to turn their thoughts toward a united organization of all librarians in the state regardless of color. It had been 14 years now since the charter members had "organized separately but hope for unity soon."

It was first suggested that the word Negro be deleted from the name of this association, but after considerable discussion, it was thought best not to

lose our identity until something definite had been worked out. Our association was already integrated because one of the charter members was white. For that reason, the name of the association was not "North Carolina Negro Librarians Association" which at first had been suggested.

Mrs. Ann M. Johnson, Instructor in Library Science at North Carolina College at Durham, and the newly appointed Executive Secretary, was authorized to write a letter to the North Carolina Library Association requesting a merger of the two associations. The text of this letter, which was sent after the final meeting of the 26th biennial conference of the N.C.L.A. on April 24, 1949, was as follows:

In view of the recent action taken by the American Library Association on Regional meetings, we of the North Carolina Negro Library Association feel that our two organizations with the same purposes in the same state, should give serious consideration to the possibility of merging and become one.

As you know, such a step has been taken by some other State organizations. We who promote books as weapons of democracy should be no less willing to take a stand for democratic actions.

At our association meeting last November our Executive Committee was given authority to make this contact. We hope that your organization will give this matter thoughtful study and let us have a reply in time for our next meeting which is scheduled for the first week in November, 1949.

After the N.C.L.A. received this letter, president Harlan C. Brown appointed a committee for the purpose of studying the request made by the N.C.N.L.A. As the result of this study, the following recommendations were made to the N.C.L.A. Executive Council:

That each association appoint committees of equal size within the next six months to meet and discuss the advantages and the problems of a joint association and of joint activities.

That our feeling should be conveyed to the North Carolina Negro Library Association that the advantages gained by the continuance of the N.C.N.L.A. are extremely important, and that in our opinion it would be much to the disadvantage of the Negro librarians to disband the N.C.N.L.A.

That, contingent on the approval of the N.C.L.A. at its next biennial conference, an invitation be extended to Negro librarians to become members of the N.C.L.A.

The fifteenth Annual Conference was held at West Charlotte High School, November 4-5, 1949 with President Joyce McLendon presiding at the opening meeting. Dr. Robert P. Daniel, President of Shaw University, spoke at the public meeting on "Illiteracy of the Literate." Guest speaker at the School Library section was Dr. Samuel E. Duncan, Supervisor of North Carolina Negro High Schools. He spoke on "Administration and Organizational Provisions for North Carolina Public School Libraries." The conference banquet speaker was Dr. Hugh M. Gloster, author and director of Communications Center of Hampton Institute. His address was on "Books

and our Struggle for Democracy." Saturday morning, Dr. Louis T. Shores, Director of the School of Library Service of Florida State University, spoke on "Trends in Reference Sources."

At this meeting members received copies of a bibliography on "Achievements of Afro-American Women of the Twentieth Century." This was a project of the research committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Constance Marteena, and would enable those interested to locate at the Holgate, J.C. Price and Woman's College Libraries in Greensboro and the Richard B. Harrison Public Library in Raleigh, materials on Afro-American women of the Twentieth Century.

Considerable praise was given the *LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW* and it was the hope of the association that the present editorial staff would continue the splendid work which Mr. Marshall had begun. Miss Evelyn Pope, acting business manager, stressed the fact that it was an expensive undertaking and required additional funds to pay for printing the next issue.

After listening to the letter from Mr. Brown, president of the N.C.L.A., regarding their executive committee recommendations on the study of the merger, the contents of which have been stated before in this paper, the membership voted to give the president the power to appoint that committee. President McLendon appointed the following: Mrs. Mary Hauser, Chairman, Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee, secretary, Miss Fannie White, Mr. D. Eric Moore and Mrs. Constance Marteena.

Miss Biverous Pretty, Librarian of

the Raleigh Elementary Schools, was chairman of the Awards committee. This committee, proceeding with great caution, never seemed to be satisfied with their procedure of making the awards. Their recommendation was that there be a jury composed of persons having wide personal contacts with libraries throughout the State of North Carolina. Committee suggestions were: Miss Eloise Camp, State School Library-Advisor; Mr. Samuel E. Duncan, North Carolina Negro High School Supervisor; Miss Marjorie Beal, Secretary and Director of the North Carolina Library Commission; Mrs. R.E. Lawrence, State Negro Elementary School Supervisor; Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee, Field Librarian, North Carolina Library Commission.

Awards were made to the following:

COLLEGE CITATION TO: Mrs. Constance Marteena, for Activities on the Research Committee and to Miss Alma Morrow for establishing a \$2400 film collection.

SCHOOL CITATION TO: Miss Elizabeth Gill for tremendous success in developing a school library in one and one-half years at William Penn High School and to Miss Louise Howell for her outstanding work in the capacity of a teacher-librarian in Shelby School.

PUBLIC LIBRARY CITATION TO: Mrs. Nell B. Wright, for library service in the Kate Bittings Hospital in Winston-Salem and to Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee for her effort toward securing a new library building in Raleigh.

HONORABLE MENTION TO: Miss Beatrice Maye for service to elementary school and people of the rural section of her community and to Miss Thelma C. Nelson for community work at Shaw University.

The meeting of the joint committee

of the N.C.L.A. and N.C.N.L.A. on the merger of the two organizations was held March 11, 1950 at the D. H. Hill Library, North Carolina State College. Those representing N.C.N.L.A. were: Mrs. Mary R. Hauser, Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee, Mrs. Joyce McLendon, Miss Thelma Nelson and D. Eric Moore. Those representing N.C.L.A. were: Miss Jane B. Wilson, Miss Nancy Gray, Mrs. Mary P. Douglas, Harlan C. Brown, and Benjamin C. Powell. Miss Elizabeth House (Mrs. Myles Hughey) served as chairman and Mr. Moore, secretary.

The N.C.N.L.A. contingent presented some strong arguments as to why there should be a merger. Of those present, Mrs. Mary P. Douglas was perhaps the most outspoken in her disapproval of the merger.

At the close of the meeting, Mr. Moore was requested to record the proceedings of the meeting and send them to the members present. He did an admirable job in his "Report of Activities Relative to a Merger of the North Carolina Library Association." It was clearly written with a detailed account of the issues involved. This document will have historical value.

In line with the objectives of the association to foster programs for professional growth, the Public Library section, in cooperation with the North Carolina Library Commission, sponsored a public library workshop for untrained librarians at the Richard B. Harrison Public Library in Raleigh, April 21-23, 1950. Workshops such as these are now integrated under the sponsorship of the N.C.L.A.

In June, 1950, Miss Marjorie Beal, Secretary and Director of the North Carolina Library Commission retired. It was with great regret that the association members realized she would no longer be officially connected with the commission. It was because of her years of seasoned experience that she was able to give invaluable direction to the organization of this association. Looking back over the annual programs, one sees her name appearing often, indicating that she had been a faithful supporter of the association as well as bringing to it constructive messages. In recognition of the high esteem which the association had for Miss Beal, they presented her with a token upon her retirement.

The Sixteenth Annual Conference was held November 3-4, 1950 in Rocky Mount at the Booker T. Washington High School. Guest speaker at the conference dinner was Mrs. Ethelyn Thomas, Director of Dramatics, and English Professor at Shaw University. At the public meeting, Honorable Edwin F. Duke, Mayor of Rocky Mount, extended words of welcome and Dr. Rufus E. Clement, President of Atlanta University, delivered the main address. He spoke on "Books for a Democratic Society." Saturday morning, Mrs. Robert Christ, Assistant Librarian at Duke University, spoke on "Librarians in a Democratic Society," and Miss Elizabeth House, the new Secretary and Director of the North Carolina Library Commission was introduced.

During the business meeting, considerable time was spent in the

discussion of an in-service training workshop for school librarians. Earlier in the fall a letter had been sent by the School Library section to Mrs. Mary P. Douglas, asking what in-service training was available to Negro school librarians. She replied by suggesting that they request one of the colleges to conduct this workshop. Mr. Moore, Director of the North Carolina College School of Library Science was present and said that it would be possible to have it at North Carolina College at Durham. This met with approval and a planning committee was appointed. Following the reports of the other committees and the election of officers, Mrs. Nell B. Wright was elected at large as ALA councilor, with her term expiring in 1945. Mrs. Ann M. Johnson was elected president and Mrs. Ray N. Moore was appointed executive secretary.

In April, 1951, letters were sent to the membership inviting them to be guests at the N.C.L.A. biennial meeting which was to be held in April 26-27, 1951 at the O. Henry Hotel in Greensboro. There were approximately 85 Negro librarians at this meeting and it was a successful demonstration which proved that the two associations could function as one. Special praise should be paid to Mr. Harlan C. Brown, President of the N.C.L.A. for the initiative he took in effecting this expression of true democracy.

The seventeenth Annual Conference was held at North Carolina College at Durham, November 2-3, 1951, with President Ann M. Johnson presiding. During the opening general meeting, Mr. James Parker, Director of the

Audio-Visual Aids Department, North Carolina College at Durham showed a film on "Library Organization." Following the sectional meetings, the membership was invited at the invitation of the Library Board of Trustees to the Stanford L. Warren Public Library to an Open House. The Friday evening banquet speaker was Dr. Rose B. Browne, Professor of Education at North Carolina College. She spoke on "Our Manifest Destiny."

At the public library sectional meeting, Miss Elizabeth House spoke on "New Horizons in State Aid to Public Libraries." This speech had special significance because it was concerned with the newly revised regulations of State Aid Funds to Public Libraries. One of the qualifications necessary for counties to obtain these funds was "Develop long range plans for county-wide service for all the people." This meant the extension of public library service to Negroes. At the business session Saturday morning, Mrs. Emma Hill Brown, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, submitted the following report which was approved:

WHEREAS the North Carolina Library Commission has announced new state aid for library regulations designed to strengthen the program of public library service to citizens of the state.

WHEREAS these regulations are in harmony with accepted principles of public library administration Therefore be it resolved:

That the N.C.N.L.A. express its approval of the new regulations and commend the Library Commission for this forward step in setting forth new and important requirements under which it is to be

expected that improvement will take place in those public libraries which meet the requirements and incentives will be held forth for other libraries.

That this association urge upon the Library Commission the importance of providing not only that there shall be library service to all inhabitants of a county, but that library opportunity equal in quality and scope shall be provided for all citizens of a county.

Lincoln Junior High School in Greensboro, N.C. served as host to the eighteenth Annual Conference November 7, 1952. Among those bringing greetings were Dr. William H. Hampton, Negro member of the City Council and the Honorable Robert H. Frazier, Mayor of Greensboro. Mr. Charles M. Adams, Librarian of Woman's College, spoke at the College Library section on "Books for an Informed College Citizenry." At the conference dinner Friday evening, Dr. Ivan E. Taylor, author and Head of the Department of English at Howard University, spoke on "Pathways to the Land of Make-Believe." Saturday morning, Miss Jane B. Wilson, President of N.C.L.A., spoke on "A Voice from Within," and Miss Gladys Johnson, Director of the North Carolina American Heritage Project, spoke on "The American Heritage Program."

In the business meeting, a letter was read by President Johnson from the N.C.L.A. stating that their organization had voted against the proposed merger at this time. This did not come as too much of a surprise to members of the association, since it was generally felt that there was still a large segment of the N.C.L.A.

membership who were not yet broad enough to face the democratic action which was being requested of them. It was felt that this association should not seek a merger again, but that they should bide their time and await the inevitable. The official results of the N.C.L.A. voting on the merger appeared in the April, 1952 issue of *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES* as follows: ballots mailed - 465; votes in the affirmative - 120; votes in the negative - 184.

At this meeting a mimeographed booklet, "Methods to More Library Participation" was distributed to those present. Questionnaires had earlier been sent to libraries in the state by the Research Committee requesting information or ideas and procedures for creating and continuing patrons' interest in the use of the library. This booklet was the summary of these findings. Miss Martha Riddick, librarian of West Charlotte High School, served as chairman of the Research Committee.

Mr. D. Eric Moore, editor of the *LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW*, reported to the conference that, in his opinion, the association was overly ambitious in attempting to publish a periodical of that size because of the cost and the difficulty of obtaining articles. He suggested that it be of a different format, perhaps a mimeographed form, with distribution among the members only. After much discussion, it was finally agreed that finances were sufficient to allow the publication of another issue and that it would be unwise to change the format

until volume one had been completed.

The Association of North Carolina High School Library Clubs was organized in March, 1953 by Mrs. Joyce McLendon, past president of N.C.N.L.A. and librarian at Washington High School in Raleigh. For many years, Mrs. McLendon has been considered an outstanding high school librarian who had the knack of working with young adults. Organization plans had their beginning in the School Library Section of the N.C.N.L.A. After the association voted its approval of such an organization in the state, it became one of the sponsors.

The objectives of this association are: to stimulate interest in books and reading; to promote a better appreciation for accepted library practices; to encourage students to use and care for materials effectively and to stimulate others to use and care for them; to foster closer cooperation among state high school clubs; to help students develop well-rounded personalities through library service and use of library materials; to serve as a recruiting agency for students in Librarianship as a profession.

Mrs. Constance Marteena, Librarian at Bennett College, was elected president at the Greensboro meeting in 1952. Mrs. Marteena's administration was marked by her ability to obtain prompt cooperation from the operational agencies of the association. She called executive meetings often and saw to it that the program of the association was carried through. Her frequent communications to members of the association seeking their suggestions for a better conference

gave them the feeling of being a part of the program.

Dr. Benjamin F. Smith, Librarian of North Carolina College at Durham, was appointed editor of the *LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW* in 1953. Others appointed to serve on the Editorial Board were Miss Evelyn Pope, Business Manager; Mrs. Lualgia P. Ferguson; Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee and Miss Mary Pinson. In October, 1953, Numbers 3 and 4 of the *LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW* were published together. This issue, which placed emphasis on articles dealing with the school library, received many favorable comments for its content and editorship.

Chapters of the American Library Association, State, Regional and Provincial, were informed by letter that they would have to apply for redesignation of chapter status. In view of this, the association felt that now was the time to step in and ask ALA not to recognize any chapter which did not allow Negro membership. The Executive Board of the N.C.N.L.A. appointed a committee on redesignation to study the issues involved in chapter redesignations and to make recommendations to ALA and the N.C.N.L.A. Committee members were Mrs. Nell Wright, chairman, the late Mrs. Mary Hauser, Mrs. Ray Moore, Mr. D. Eric Moore, and Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee. Upon the death of Mrs. Hauser, Miss Martha Riddick was added to the committee. President Marteena sat in on all committee meetings.

On March 11, 1953, this committee instructed the executive secretary to write the following letter:

Mr. David H. Clift, Executive Secretary
American Library Association
50 E. Huron Street
Chicago 11, Illinois

Dear Mr. Clift:

We, the North Carolina Negro Library Association, have observed with approval the recent reaffirmation by ALA of its antidiscrimination policy in electing to hold its 1954 annual conference in a setting in which the personal rights and dignity of all ALA members will be respected without embarrassment to Negro librarians. We feel that the cause of librarianship is greatly strengthened when ALA accepts no compromise of high democratic principles.

We are aware of the current program of redesignation of state, regional and provincial chapters of ALA. We greatly hope that in this reorganization process and in the resulting structure the individual membership rights of ALA members who happen to be Negroes will be fully respected.

Because of our interest in this matter, we would appreciate your giving us answers to the following questions concerning adopted policy and procedure in the redesignation of ALA chapters:

The By-laws state that a state chapter shall be established in any state "in which a majority of the members residing in the area involved vote in favor of such action." What requirements does ALA make as to the machinery of holding the election to guarantee that every ALA member in a given state shall be given the opportunity to cast his ballot and to be counted as one of the total number of members residing in the state upon which total is based the calculation of the number of favorable votes required of the issue.

Assuming that when the redesignation of state chapters is completed there will be only one chapter in each state, and noting that the state chapter will be only one chapter in each state, and noting that the state chapter will be "the final authority

within the American Library Association in respect to all library programs and policies which concern only the areas for which the chapter is responsible," and assuming further that each ALA member is entitled to the democratic membership right of participating equally with all other ALA authority in that state, we ask what policy and program ALA has for guaranteeing the observance of this right on the part of Negro members of ALA residing in the South.

Noting that approval by Council of the constitution and by-laws of the state organization which seeks status as an ALA chapter is one of the conditions of membership as a chapter, we ask if in examining state association constitutions and by-laws Council will require that these documents set forth the membership eligibility requirements of their respective state organizations in such terms as to make it clear that all members of ALA will be qualified for membership in the state organization.

We shall appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,
RAY N. MOORE, Executive Secretary
North Carolina Negro Library Ass'n.

(Excerpt from a letter received from Mr. Clift)

March 20, 1953

Dear Mrs. Moore:

I am writing to acknowledge your letter of March 11, in which you raise many thoughtful questions relating to the current program of redesignation of state, regional and provincial chapters of ALA. As you know, many of these questions were touched upon by Council at Midwinter and the Committees was directed to give further study to Article V of the By-laws.

In order to assist the Committee in its study, the ALA Executive Board is appointing a subcommittee that will serve in an advisory capacity to the Committee on Constitution and By-laws. I hope to work closely with these two committees and I

shall be able before long to reply to questions you have raised. I think I can answer one question now. It is very likely that the ALA itself will conduct the elections in the various states and this will, of course, insure use of the latest and most complete list of ALA members.

The Nineteenth Annual Conference of the association convened November 6-7, 1953 at Elizabeth City State Teachers College with President Constance Marteena presiding. Mrs. Grace T. Stevenson, Associate Executive Secretary of ALA, spoke at the conference dinner on "The Results of the Adult Education Survey." At the Friday evening public meeting, Mr. Thomas W. Young, president of the *JOURNAL AND GUIDE* newspaper spoke on "Negro Business Enterprise."

The Saturday morning business meeting opened with President Marteena delivering a challenging address on the subject of "Goals for 1953-54." Later in the morning, Mrs. Wright gave the report of the Redesignation Committee. This report included the reading of correspondence concerning the redesignation of chapters which had transpired between ALA officials and the N.C.N.L.A. executive secretary. Discussion of this report reflected in the members a renewed hope that an integrated library association in the state was not far away. The committee was requested to continue its work.

Miss Allegra Westbrook, Librarian, Brevard Street Branch Public Library, Charlotte and chairman of the Awards and Recognition Committee, announced the awards to the following for their outstanding achievements:

SCHOOL LIBRARY CITATION: Mrs. Joyce C. McLendon, Librarian of Ligon High School, Raleigh, for her work with student library assistants.

PUBLIC LIBRARY CITATION: Mrs. Nell B. Wright, Librarian, Horton Branch Public Library, Winston-Salem, for her work in adult education and to the Staff of the Horton Branch Public Library for its excellent cooperative work in promoting adult community discussions.

Two resolutions worthy of note were read by Miss Beatrice Lomax, Librarian, Leonard Street School, High Point, and chairman of the Resolution Committee. They were:

WHEREAS the needs for an advisor of school libraries throughout North Carolina have increased and are still increasing, and after the recent appointment of a second state Library Advisor, there is still inadequate supervision, therefore be it resolved that this organization ask that North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to appoint a qualified Negro to serve in the supervisory capacity throughout the state.

WHEREAS many librarians have to pay substitute teacher and all expenses in order to attend the Library Association Meetings and many do not attend who otherwise would, therefore be it resolved that a letter be sent from the Executive office to all Superintendents and Principals asking that they give librarians and teacher-librarians time off with pay in order that they might keep abreast of the times, by attending the N.C.N.L.A.

President Marteena was elected ALA councilor for the term 1955-59. Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee was appointed Historian and Mrs. Lualgia P. Ferguson, reporter.

On June 25, 1954, the ALA

membership ratified an amendment to the ALA By-laws under which, in the future, there will be one chapter of ALA in each state. It is understood that membership in the chapter will not be restricted by race. In the light of this amendment, the N.C.L.A. wished to apply for redesignation, and in order to do so, it must first admit Negroes to membership into their association. As the result of this ruling, the members of the N.C.L.A. voted in September 1954, to admit Negroes into their association. The unofficial report of the voting was as follows: Votes mailed, 568; Votes returned, 362; Votes in the affirmative, 255; Votes in the negative, 107.

When President Martena was notified by the N.C.L.A. that they had voted to admit Negroes into their association, she was requested to arrange a meeting with their president, Miss Charlesanna Fox, and the N.C.N.L.A. committee on redesignation to discuss the designation of an ALA chapter in North Carolina. At this meeting, which was held October 23, 1954 at Bennett College, were Miss Charlesanna Fox and Miss Marjorie J. Hood representing N.C.L.A. and Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Lee, Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Moore and President Martena representing N.C.N.L.A. with full membership rights and privileges and assured them that every effort would be made toward working out solutions to racial problems.

Concerning the issue of which chapter should apply for redesignation, Miss Fox said that members of the N.C.L.A. were to vote by mail in November to determine whether they

should apply to ALA for designation of their chapter for North Carolina. The question was then asked the N.C.N.L.A. committee that if the N.C.L.A. voted to apply, would they seek application. The committee replied that they were not in power at this time to say whether their association wished to make application or not but would bring it before the membership at the next annual meeting. Opinions expressed during this conference indicated that the N.C.L.A. in view of its seniority in years of existence was the logical chapter to be designated. Also that in light of the policies granting Negro librarians full membership and privileges in this association, there was no particular need for N.C.N.L.A. to apply.

Mr. Moore was asked to prepare a report of the Committee on Redesignation to be sent to all N.C.N.L.A. members to allow them time to study the issues involved in order that they might vote intelligently at the November meeting.

Excerpts from this report are:

N.C.N.L.A. may choose among three alternatives at the annual conference in Wilson:

1. Decide to send to ALA an application for designation of N.C.N.L.A. as the North Carolina chapter. If both state associations decide to submit applications for chapter designations, it would seem advisable for the two associations to cooperate in the polling of all ALA members in North Carolina as to their choice of the association, which should be designated by ALA as its North Carolina chapter.

2. Take no action about N.C.N.L.A. to become the North Carolina chapter (assuming that N C L A will decide to apply.)

Your committee recommends that N.C.N.L.A. endorse the application of N.C.L.A. (if it is made) for designation as the North Carolina chapter of ALA. We recommend this for the following reasons:

1. N.C.L.A. is the oldest (since 1904) and largest state library association in North Carolina.

2. It has the longest and most fruitful record of professional library leadership in its work with ALA, N.C. Legislative Council, the state library agencies, officials of the general state government and with private educational and cultural organizations.

3. It provides professional contacts for the largest number of librarians in the state.

4. With its membership open to all, it offers the best opportunity for representing all library interests in the state.

5. A unified association, as the ALA chapter, will mean more professional and cultural growth for North Carolina librarians and friends of libraries.

The Twentieth Anniversary celebration of the N.C.N.L.A. was held at the Elvie Street School in Wilson, November 5-6, 1954 with President Marteena presiding. At the conference dinner, Dr. Hobart Jarrett, chairman, Humanities Division, Bennett College, spoke on "Overlooked Literary Genre." Miss Beatrice Lomax spoke on "An Appreciation of our Founders." At the end of her speech she presented Mrs. Mollie Huston Lee an orchid on behalf of the Association in recognition of her 20 years of service to the association. Mrs. Lee responded with brief remarks on the benefits which she had derived from the association. Even though the time may soon be near when a Negro library association may not be necessary, she felt that the experiences gained by the librarians in the last 20

years were invaluable.

At the public meeting, The Honorable John D. Wilson, Mayor of Wilson, was one of those extending greetings. Mrs. Josephine P. Sherrill, Librarian at Livingstone College and a chartermember spoke on "A Backward Glance," a subject which gave her an opportunity to reminisce about funny and interesting incidents which had happened in the last 20 years of the association. Dr. John Hope Franklin, author and Professor of History at Howard University, was the main speaker. His subject was "Anti-Communism in America — the British View." Miss Cora P. Bomar, State School Library Advisor, North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction spoke at the School Library section on "Problems of the School Librarian."

At the first general session Friday afternoon, Mrs. Wright combined her ALA council report and Redesignation Committee report into one. She made the same recommendation to the body which appeared in Mr. Moore's report on redesignation.

Although this report was accepted unanimously by a standing vote, the issues were not voted upon in proper parliamentary procedure and there are questions in some members minds whether the association has taken definite action on the issues involved.

Saturday morning, President Marteena spoke on her recent visits to libraries in the Caribbean. The Awards and Recognition Committee made the following awards:

SCHOOL LIBRARY CITATION: To Mrs. Helen Holt Alexander, Librarian, Carver Consolidated School, Winston-Salem, for the workshop which she sponsored with the theme "Forward with Books."

COLLEGE LIBRARY CITATIONS: Dr. Benjamin F. Smith, for receiving a \$5,000.00 Ford Foundation Grant for an Adult Education program at North Carolina College at Durham.

HONORABLE MENTION: To Mrs. E. A. Jenkins, former librarian at the Wilson Negro Public Library, Wilson, who instituted the growth and development of the Wilson Negro Public Library and to Mrs. Constance H. Marteen who served so conscientiously throughout the two years she was president of the association.

The research committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Josephine P. Sherrill distributed to the members *Who's Who In North Carolina Negro Libraries*, a booklet containing biographical sketches of 114 North Carolina Negro Librarians. At the close of the meeting Miss Martha Riddick was elected eleventh president of the association.

Reflecting over the past two decades in the life of the association,

space will allow for only a few of the major events and experiences to be mentioned in this summary. Librarians have enjoyed the privilege of meeting old and new friends that they might talk about the experiences and problems which they have in common. There have been opportunities to see, hear, and meet many leading authors of the Negro race and professional authorities of the country. The sponsorship of in-service training programs, study groups and the presentation of awards have stimulated professional growth and interest in reasearch. The leadership opportunities experienced by so many have provided them with valuable equipment for holding responsible positions in the future with dignity and assurance. And finally, through the power of organization and united action, the N.C.L.A. has opened its membership to Negroes.

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