

## THE ROWAN PUBLIC LIBRARY\*

*By Mrs. Claude S. Morris, Trustee*

Salisbury, an old cultural town in the Piedmont section, had no public library until 1910 when a study club, "The Travelers," decided there must be free books for all. The idea grew; an enthusiastic campaign for books and funds resulted in the opening of a long-desired public library in the little house on the corner of the Boyden lot—often mistaken for Andrew Jackson's law office which formerly stood nearby.

A volunteer librarian and library committee kept all going so well that the county and city included the library in their 1921 budgets and the county provided rooms in the Community Building. The library committee became the Board of Trustees of the Salisbury Public Library!

Soon there were a few borrowers from the county and some took books

on consignment for others in their neighborhood. The Home Demonstration Clubs played an important role in establishing book stations in the county and in building up county service throughout the years.

Since its organization in 1923, the Salisbury Woman's Club has made an annual contribution and has also supervised book festivals, story hours, library teas and art exhibits to create more interest in the library. The Junior Woman's Club has given tables, chairs and books for the children's room and now operates the hospital branch. Other civic and patriotic organizations, the city recreation program, the local paper and radio station have all been most co-operative in publicizing and promoting the library.

More and more it has become a community interest.

In 1935 new members were added to the Board of Trustees. A trained librarian was employed early in 1936 and re-organization effected according to the standards of the American Library Association and North Carolina Library Commission. The name was changed to the Rowan Public Library.

The personal guidance received from the Commission has been most helpful in formulating policies. The interpretation of objectives is constantly expanding to meet the special need of the hour. At present books helpful to a better understanding of nations and to post-war planning are being featured—ever weaving the best of the old and the best of the new into a fresh library pattern.

The W.P.A. library project with its book-mending, its bookmobile and additional staff personnel was a vital factor at that period of development.

Too much cannot be said in appre-

ciation of State Aid coming when more books were a necessity if library expansion was to be a fact rather than an idle dream of librarian and trustees. Branch libraries have been the immediate outgrowth. Rowan is unique in having so many small towns, hence emphasis has been placed on helping these communities to establish their own branches. All branches are operated under the supervision of the county librarian including the Negro branch. When our bookmobile is "unfrozen" it will be free to serve strictly rural sections.

The Board of Trustees has sent representatives to national and state meetings to get first-hand information as to library trends. They are now making a study of "Post-War Standards for Public Libraries."

It is most significant that two recently formed groups, The Salisbury Community Foundation and the Citizens Planning Committee, have included the library in their planning for community development. This recognition as an important public service agency demands that the library be "geared to the times and ready to meet the demands and opportunities of the post-war period."

A meeting of trustees of all branches and other friends of the library is being planned, a library survey is in the offing, an assistant with some library training and experience will be added to the staff in June. There have been discouragements and at times progress was too slow, but always better days seemed just around the corner so the staff, trustees, and other interested citizens "make big plans, aim high in *hope and work*."

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\* This is the first of a proposed series of articles on libraries in the state.

## TAR HEEL LIBRARY NOTES

Mrs. Muriel S. Jordan, outstanding among children's librarians of the state, recently resigned after fifteen years with the Durham Public Library. Before coming to North Carolina she served as children's librarian in the New York Public Library, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburg, the Madison, Wis., Free Library, and the Lawson McGhee Library in Knoxville. Following a year as cataloger of both adult and juvenile books for the Durham library, she became children's librarian in September, 1931. Her work since then has included organizing public library work with schools in Durham, assisting both city and county schools in reorganizing their own libraries, and organizing in 1943 the Y. E. Smith Branch of the Durham Public Library. In addition, she has taught since 1938 in the summer sessions of the Library School in Chapel Hill. Her successor, Merna J. Cox, formerly children's li-

brarian in Rock Hill, South Carolina, began work on April 1.

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