

North Carolina Libraries

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A Glance at the 1944 Library Survey

By Helen L. Butler, Professor of Librarianship, Marywood College, Scranton, Pa.

Visiting Instructor, School of Library Science, U.N.C., Summer 1936, Winter and Spring 1941.

It is the beginning of wisdom for individual or institution when self-inventory and soul-searching begin. Then is the time that profit or loss shows up, sound practices which perhaps bear amplification are revealed, weak policies which need reinforcing stand out in the red, and very likely, bad spots which merit excision look very dark indeed. It is also a time for self-questioning and reorientation. What goal are we headed for? Why was our present policy adopted? Are our methods as effectual as might be? Have we clung to routines and deepened ruts when we should have been striking out for new fields?

These are some of the reasons why the North Carolina Library Survey is good business. The timing is strategic: long enough since the revitalizing of the public libraries in the state and the expansion of the school libraries for critical evaluation of trends and achievements; early enough in advance of the peace period with its inevitable changes and readjustments to lay careful plans. The findings of the Survey were significant: evidence of a sturdy beginning, of roots strongly planted, of healthy growth, of wise direction—and of almost as far still to go until national standards have been reached.

Take, for example, the matter of availability. In four years' time, the percentage of residents in the state without library service was cut from 48 to 11. That is remarkable and gratifying. It must have been a dramatic change, since Mrs. Lee tells us that in the 1942-43 biennium some 600,000 Negroes or about 17% of the total population of the state, were still without books and libraries.

More interesting, however, than the fact of increased areas of service is the pattern being evolved. Instead of isolated city and village libraries, very few of which could hope to attain the \$25,000 annual minimum income which A.L.A. postwar standards set as basic, the North Carolina trend toward county and regional institutions ensures not only wider service, larger book collections and more properly qualified personnel, but does this without undue duplication of effort among the smaller units and thus without subsequent waste of taxpayers' funds. There are now 82 county libraries with a per capita income two and one-third times as large as that of the 27 county libraries existing four years ago. Small wonder, then, that in spite of heavy discarding, the book stock should have increased by a

third of its per capita volume, and that the number of trained librarians should have enlarged at a satisfactory rate.

A third matter for state congratulation is the manner in which many libraries in the state are cutting across old-time professional concepts and mental barriers which would have seemed insurmountable a generation ago. Outstanding here is the cooperation between libraries of various regions, types and clientele. Schools are receiving books from public library collections via bookmobile and in classroom lots. They are consulting public librarians about their school library problems. In one instance, at least, the public librarian is part-time supervisor of the local school library. In return, school libraries are housing branch libraries for adults, are sharing trained librarians with public libraries, are lending books for summer reading, and sometimes are giving school credit for summer public library reading. Similar understanding of the source and purpose of public funds is shown by the use of the same county bookmobiles by whites and Negroes. This is very promising.

It may be queried, however, why with the increase in book stocks and the improvement in professional training the per capita circulation for public libraries should have risen only 1/100 of a volume in these four years. The 1944 figure for North Carolina (1.68 volumes per capita) is well below the present A.L.A. goal of 5-10 volumes. The answer must lie in the character of the period, in the war strains and prolonged work week which have caused a general decline in the nation's reading. When the time span is pushed back, as in the decennium noted for Negro libraries, both school and public libraries are observed to have nearly doubled their per capita circulation.

Much more serious for the future is the condition of library quarters. With 85 of the 92 reporting libraries facing overcrowded buildings and exhausted shelf space in the next five years, the prospect is not pleasant. Nor can present working conditions be ideal when only half of these have telephones and the majority need new lighting and heating plants. Staff efficiency and readers' pleasure alike suffer when surroundings and equipment are not conducive to optimum results. Yet there is little likelihood that a remodeling or repair fund can be accumulated during these years of materials shortages and priority lacks. Library income in North Carolina has risen to 21¢ per capita. As Miss Beal points out, that is exactly one-half as good as the nation at large enjoys. It is one-fifth of the dollar per capita which is present library standard. And it is one-tenth of the sum postulated for superior service in the postwar period. Certainly 21¢ will not permit the accumulation of a reserve fund for building purposes.

Has library service in North Carolina reached its maximum development, then? There is no indication in the data that it has. Unfortunately, only a minor part of the evidence deals with the effectiveness of the service rendered. An intangible, qualitative matter, this would have

been difficult to assess completely. Nevertheless, the reports on contacts made with civic groups, on talks to Rotarians, Lions, women's clubs and church organizations, on instruction to school children in library usage, would show that libraries have not waited passively for readers to become conscious of their existence, but that they have deliberately sought out potential friends and readers. In these reader contacts and in the satisfaction which the reader derives from his own grass-roots library, on the one hand, and in able leadership, backed by the support of key figures in local government, on the other hand, seems to lie the hope for increased appropriation—as North Carolina's own experience would prove.

All the statistics in the Census reports are valueless unless after their compilation something is done about them. So with the 1944 Library Survey. Trends, achievements and lacks show plainly. Remains now the obligation of taking action on these. After all, self-investigation is only the beginning of wisdom; its end lies in the successful achievement of the goal thus revealed.

A.L.A. Officers Elected for 1945-46

The American Library Association announces the election of officers for 1945-46. Ralph A. Ulveling, librarian of the Detroit Public Library, becomes president, succeeding Carl Vitz of Minneapolis, and Mary U. Rothrock, library specialist of the Tennessee Valley Authority, becomes first vice-president and president-elect. Other newly elected officers are Emerson Greenaway, 1935 graduate of the School of Library Science of the University of North Carolina, librarian of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, second vice-president; and Rudolph Gjelsness, chairman of the Department of Library Science at the University of Michigan, treasurer.

Charles Whedbee 1875-1945

Mr. Charles Whedbee served as a member of the North Carolina Library Commission Board during the years 1939-1941. The Library Commission Board meeting in Raleigh August 9, 1945, wish to extend to his wife and his family sincere sympathy.

Mr. Whedbee possessed a broad vision for library service. He appreciated the inspiration and the stimulation which results from a knowledge of great literature. He worked diligently to secure books and public library service for every man and woman, boy and girl in North

Carolina so they might secure facts and information, grow mentally and meet intelligently every situation. He visited, at his own expense, in the fall of 1940 every legislator and with each one discussed the need for more books, methods of promoting the use of books, and the State's responsibility toward its people. His acquaintance with legislative procedure, his watchful interest, his wise judgment and honesty were of immeasurable importance.

The American Library Association recognized his distinguished service as a trustee and selected him as one of two trustees in the nation to receive an award at the Milwaukee Conference in June, 1942. The citation read, "In recognition of his belief in the value and benefit of libraries to the people of North Carolina and especially for his realistic and energetic efforts in behalf of securing state aid for public libraries in his state."

Professional Literature

Reviewed by Roseanne Hudson Harrington, formerly Woman's College Library, U.N.C.

About a year and a half ago, the A.L.A. began to publish a worth-while series called "Planning for Libraries." Through this column we brought to your attention the first two pamphlets in the group, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (February, 1944) and *Library Planning* (December, 1944). The most recent addition is *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow* (A.L.A. \$1.50). It is an excellent statement of functions and standards by a committee of experts in the field, the chairman being Mrs. Mary Peacock Douglas. The topics covered include service, personnel, book collection, housing, and administration. The treatment of each is concise and admirably practical. Every school librarian will want to become familiar with its recommendations in order that she may speak intelligently and effectively when her community begins to plan for post-war expansion.

Alice Hackett's *Fifty Years of Best Sellers* (Bowker, \$3.00) is a fascinating little volume. For each year from 1895 to 1945, there is a list of best sellers plus a brief commentary on literary, social, and historical events. Also of interest is the list of "American best sellers, 1880-1945, in order of sales." It is perhaps rather surprising to learn, for example, that *Gone with the Wind* ranks third, exceeded in sales only by *In His Steps* and *Message to Garcia*. Interesting, is it to note those authors whose works have been favorites consistently through the years. Miss Hackett's book is not for cover-to-cover reading, but it should be of value in any library which assists study clubs. It should, at the same time, provide a pleasant hour for anyone professionally interested in literature and its trends. For those of a more inquiring mind, the question of why a particular book became a best seller can be

most entertaining. *Fifty Years of Best Sellers* will repay generously any time spent on its examination.

If you ever happen to be in Minneapolis, be sure to visit the Public Library, birth-place of the Model Librarian. This amazing lady is the heroine of *Patrons Are People* (A.L.A. \$.50). Tactful, competent, and above all, possessed of an incredibly even disposition, she deals with difficult patrons and situations with enviable ease. The pamphlet, which is illustrated with amusing drawings, was originally prepared by a staff committee for use within the library itself. The A.L.A. has rendered commendable service by making it available for general consumption. The suggestions for meeting and serving the public are practical and are equally applicable to libraries of all sizes and types. Few of us realize it but, in our contacts with our patrons, we are carrying on a major part of our library's public relations work. Making those contacts pleasant will pay dividends in good will and perhaps more tangibly in increased support. Are you a Muddled or a Model Librarian?

Keys to Unlock New Interests

By Olan V. Cook, University of North Carolina Library

Activities and resources of the University of North Carolina Library are introduced to the students and other readers through a series of frequently changed exhibitions. Those exhibits, simply and colorfully arranged, definitely aid in the development of interests through the integrated use of printed material. They not only stimulate fresh viewpoints but also serve to interpret the services and functions of the Library.

Facilities for exhibition in Chapel Hill range from book trays, bulletin boards and table tops to built-in cases with recessed lighting. The larger exhibitions are placed in upright, glass front cases in the entrance lobby and in large flat cases in the adjacent corridor. Most of the exhibitions, composed of books, maps, posters, prints, manuscripts, curios and other library resources, are usually related to subjects of current interest and parallel general phases of instructional work.

During the past year 37 exhibitions were arranged at the University Library. Description of a few will illustrate their trend. About a week before the Mayflower Cup award was made, the books by North Carolina authors published in 1944 were placed on display. As soon as the award was announced, this exhibition was expanded to include the Mayflower Cup winners from 1931 to 1944. At the time when some of the world's greatest naval engagements were taking place in the Pacific, exact scale models of Japanese and United States fighting ships

were placed on exhibition. In this connection Jane's *Fighting Ships* and histories of naval warfare were emphasized.

When the Japanese armies were about to cut China into two parts, a collection of Chinese war posters was placed in the cases. Books and pamphlets describing conditions in China and the work of the Chinese cooperatives and other war efforts were interspersed with the colorful posters. With the help of the University of North Carolina Press and the cooperation of printers in Chapel Hill and Durham, the Fifty Books of the Year (1944) selected by the American Institute of Graphic Arts were shown. As a part of the University commencement exercises, an exhibition of distinctive gifts and purchases made during the previous year was displayed.

Materials used in the preparation of the Study Bulletins issued by the University Library Extension Department were shown frequently. These new books, with attractive jackets centered around copies of the study outlines, emphasized the state-wide services of the University Library. Among them were *Nature Writers in the U.S.* and *Adventures in Reading* by Agatha Adams, and *Music in America* by Adelaide McCall.

The first sketches made by an English artist in North America were the water colors in which John White, later Governor, recorded his observations in 1585 of the Indians, the flora and the fauna of the North Carolina coastal area. A set of photostatic reproductions of these drawings, many of which were seen for the first time in Chapel Hill, were grouped about the rare and beautiful volume of Theodor de Bry's *Great Voyages* (1591), in which they appeared first as engravings, and served to stimulate greater interest in the library's growing collection of Raleighana and the history of the Roanoke Island Colony.

In conformance with the good neighbor policy, the library exhibited numerous materials from the "countries south of us." Of particular interest to the students of the graphic arts was the Edward Larocque Tinker collection of books and prints exemplifying the work of Mexican printers and illustrators. Other materials exhibited with a similar purpose in view were a collection of Latin American books showing methods of binding, paintings from ten Latin American republics lent by the Museum of Modern Art, Latin American history and literature, in connection with a conference on inter-American affairs sponsored by the Inter-American Institute, and "Our Neighbor Republics" as a part of the program pointing toward Pan American Day.

In honor of the press and a newspaper conference held in January, 1945, and as a tickler for the courses in early American history and the study of democratic government, the Library exhibited a collection of books, manuscripts and documents illustrating the development of the democratic principle, the growth of the American tradition and the freedom of the

press. "From Papyrus to Limited Editions and from Clay Tablets to Microfilm" was one of the several exhibits drawing upon the Library's Hanes collection for materials illustrative of the origin and development of the book.

Other exhibitions included uniforms of the United States Army 1774-1789, the early dime novel as contrasted with the modern editions of the "pocket book," biographies and prints of distinguished painters, photographs of old North Carolina homes, early fashion plates, the etchings of Louis Orr, wood engravings by Clare Leighton used in her *Time of Man*, German war relics, handicraft materials from the Marshall Islands, the Cutten Collection of early American silver, Estelle Lawson Page's golf trophies, and modern books of cartoons.

As a general rule, neither time nor material is available for the more elaborate techniques of exhibition, but several basic principles are adhered to rather closely. For instance, timeliness and tie-up with public events and activities are of major importance. A good example of this factor was the opening in the Library of the University War Information Center at 9 o'clock on the morning of December 8, 1941. Another principle requires simplicity of arrangement, the use of quickly prepared signs and labels and inexpensive installations. Each item exhibited should have a label with helpful explanatory notes. A third factor calls for publicity and notices in the college newspaper and the weekly bulletin. At times individual announcements are made through the mails and a regular part of the procedure is the preparation of a news story for the local and state papers. A fourth principle is the necessity of frequent change. Casual, quick exhibits are usually more effective than precise or elaborate displays. Frequent changes create the idea that something new can always be seen at the Library. It has been found that on the University campus an exhibition remains alive and of interest to readers for a period of about three weeks. If it remains in place much longer, interests are dulled rather than sharpened. Finally, all exhibitions should be supplemented by books.

The Quiz Program and Children's Reading

By Muriel S. Jordan, Formerly Children's Librarian, Durham Public Library

The quiz program we have had so long with us that, at first thought, it might seem to have passed its zenith as a publicity method. However, as far as children are concerned, this is definitely not true. Librarians who yearn for new ways of promoting juvenile reading are prone to forget that a constantly changing clientele keeps fresh what would otherwise be old and trite. The quiz program in its various forms is adaptable to a considerable number of situations, ranging all the way from the broadcasting studio to the individual school

classroom. The variety of questions based on books is limited only by the boundaries of the field of children's literature itself.

Two fundamental requirements should be kept in mind if the quiz program is to be a success. First, the organizer and the master of ceremonies (who may or may not be the same person) must have a wide knowledge of children's books. This is absolutely essential if the program is to be broadcast over the radio, both for the preparation of questions and for the skillful handling of random answers which will always crop up during an unrehearsed program. It is of less importance, of course, in school or library programs where the audience is mainly children, who are less exacting and critical than a radio audience. Second, as large a number of children as possible must participate in the program. This is most important, regardless of the size and character of the audience. The participation may take the form of actually answering questions on the stage or before the microphone or of preparing questions to be used on the program. Obviously only a limited group can be performers, but any number of children may share in the latter activity.

A description of the way in which one series of programs was organized will illustrate the way in which large numbers of children may be included in such a project. This series, called WHAT'S FUN TO READ, was sponsored by the Durham Public Library and broadcast over radio station WDNC. It began in October and continued weekly until mid-February the first year. The second year it began in October and ran through December. In order to stimulate an interest in the project a club was organized several months before the radio series was scheduled to start, the cooperation of the broadcasting station having been assured. Children who wished to qualify for a place on the program as "book experts" joined the club. They read as extensively as they could and the library kept a record of each child's reading. Club meetings took the form of practice quiz programs. In the fall six children from each school in the city were chosen to make up the teams who would answer questions during the broadcast. Most of them came from the club but a few were chosen on the recommendation of their teachers in school. Two teams participated in each program. They scored a certain number of points, graded according to the difficulty of the questions, for each question correctly answered. Each team scored for its school, not for individual members. All children were invited to submit questions and those accepted for use on the program added more points to the score of the school from which they came. Also the children who sent them in received recognition on the air. At the end of the series the school having the highest score received several new books for its library. Sixty children only had places on the programs but several hundred submitted questions.

In making out the questions for a quiz program several considerations must be kept in mind. First of all, they must not be too difficult for the children to answer. This means that

they must be based on books which they know or may reasonably be supposed to have read. The reading records kept for club members were carefully consulted when questions were being formulated. Secondly, since the interest of an audience is greater in questions which it, too, can answer (mentally, of course), care must be taken to use as many questions as possible based on books with which the audience may reasonably be supposed to be familiar. This means using a judicious mixture of old and new favorites. In the third place, the librarian must never lose sight of the fact that her primary aim is to stimulate reading. This involves propounding questions which are designed to bring out the intriguing high spots in a book as often as possible. If the master of ceremonies can manage to draw spontaneous comments from the children on the program, the interest will be greatly increased.

The response to WHAT'S FUN TO READ was so active and widespread that the time and effort involved seemed well-spent. However, there should be no illusion about the amount of both required. Approximately two days of each week were needed for the preparation of the fifteen-minute program. It should be emphasized, however, that a radio series is the most difficult form in which the quiz program can be used. Much easier and less time-consuming would be the individual programs suitable for story hours, club meetings or school auditorium use.

Tar Heel Library Notes

Miss Mary Duncan McAnally of High Point, a graduate of the School of Library Science of the University of North Carolina and for several years an assistant in the Salem College Library, died in Hawaii in July, 1945. She had gone there to continue her work as an Army librarian.

The Executive Committee of the North Carolina Library Association has decided to hold a general meeting of the Association in the spring of 1946. The Committee will meet early this fall to begin work on plans for the meeting.

Charles M. Adams who has been assistant to the director of libraries at Columbia University for the past seven years has arrived to assume his new duties as librarian of Woman's College of the University. A native of La-Moure, North Dakota, Mr. Adams did his undergraduate work at Amherst College, and holds a bachelor of science degree in librarianship and a master's degree in English from Columbia University.

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