

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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What Home Demonstration Club Members And Other Rural Women Expect Of The Library*

By

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BETHEL

PAST PRESIDENT PITT COUNTY
FEDERATION OF HOME DEMONSTRATION CLUBS

Mr. Chairman, and Friends—for friends are what you are.

If you are here in the interest of a greater Library Service for all people, especially Rural and small town families, you are here in the interest of something needed. 75% of the people of our state gamble with nature everyday, putting back in the soil the first of every year what they made the year before. They depend on God's Program of Nature to give sunshine and rain that they might harvest another crop in the fall. Many of these people are isolated from the outside world—no radio, no daily paper or telephone or mode of travel. These are our dirt farmers.

I have lived my life very near the soil. My paternal grand parents were farmers. My father was a farmer. My mother was one of our early school teachers. I married a farmer and a rural mail carrier. As a farmer's wife I feel I am in a position to know the farmer's program. There are ups and downs and joys received from green acres. As wife of a rural mail carrier, helping him when going was hard and mail heavy, I haven't forgotten the anxious look on the faces that met us at the mail boxes. I can see my husband now as he would go deep down in his old mail bag to find mail sent in bundles such as advertisements or circulars that he might not send them away empty handed. The question uppermost in the minds of Home Demonstration Club women and small town families and friends is what can be expected of a greater Library Service? A county Library or several small counties coming together to form a Regional Library which would better serve their people or have a Library on wheels, giving to our rural and small towns service equal with our cities and larger towns.

If you were to see a doctor stop in front of a rural home your first thought would be that someone in the family is sick. If an ambulance were seen parked there you would think of a hospital trip for a member of the family. If you see a Bookmobile parked in front of the home with a mother and three children with her to exchange books, you would say "That is a

(*Presented to the North Carolina Public Library District Meeting held at Greenville on October 6, 1948)

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

beginning of things hoped for." The children exchange their colorful bedtime stories for new ones. The mother anxiously gets books to assist her in rearing the family written by professors, doctors, and men of Science. Next the farmer comes to the Bookmobile to seek advice from books on how to handle a Dairy Barn. He finds no books with this information, but the Librarian promises to bring him one on her next trip.

Is that expecting too much? With that word Expect—let me combine Hope, for I love those people and may expect too much for them.

I have heard former Commissioner of Agriculture, Kerr Scott. He has encouraged us at State and County meetings to cultivate our education, to study our Democracy, to know more about our Government, to study our candidates from time to time and to vote intelligently. Some day we would like to see in the Senate and House of Representatives men and women from our rural and small town families who really know the rural family's needs.

What could mean more to our youth today than having our teachers and Librarians working together? Librarians could serve as guides in selecting books just for the asking. A teacher could receive 15 or 20 books carried her by Librarians for her use and the pupils on the subject to be studied paving the way for a better understanding of the big subject.

Youth must learn to use a Library through teachers and Librarians to be able to use a greater Library service.

Our reading in our schools has been criticized somewhat. Coming from our youth, they say "Gracious knows what our teachers will give us to do if they go to another summer school at East Carolina Teachers Col-

lege." As for reading, they read their math to work their examples correctly; history, we read to retain until test or examination for that dead stuff. Their books they read during the year, they read and make book reports. If they don't master them they are forming the habit of reading. They are becoming reading conscious. I quote the late Dr. Townsend, the man that brought about his death by falling from a pear tree on Saturday before the last Mother's Day that he was privileged to live, "Parents, give your Youth good reading material, fill their spare time with clean wholesome recreation, for so goes our Youth of today, so goes our Nation of tomorrow."

What can we expect of a greater Library Service from our branch library? It means the circulation of books carried from one end of our county to the other, keeping books in reach of our people at all times.

Now friends, what can we expect or hope from such a service—or greater Library Service? First, our people may become reading conscious; Second our parents may become conscious of our home being our children's first institution. Our libraries are our rural people's universities.

Last to read is to grow, and from our readers we may expect our future leaders.

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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Permission is hereby granted to reprint
any part of this bulletin.

During October your association and the North Carolina Library Commission sponsored a series of seven regional or district meetings on public library service in North Carolina. Your editor was present at the meeting held in Greenville at the Sheppard Memorial Library on October 6, 1948. This was typical of the other district meetings. Two of the addresses of the day are presented in this issue of your bulletin. The group was welcomed to Greenville by Mr. T. I. Wagner, chairman of the Board of the Sheppard Memorial Library. Miss Allsbrook presented the "National Plan for Public Library Service." Following this Miss Beal presented the "library picture" of North Carolina today, which was followed by a discussion of the need for statistics by Miss Madge Blalock, Chief Library Assistant of the North Carolina Library Commission. This was followed by a discussion period and announcements.

Following this morning session the group enjoyed a lunch at the Airport Inn with more than fifty present. For the entire meeting there were sixty in attendance including representatives from almost every library system in the district.

Dr. John D. Messick, President of East Carolina Teachers College, spoke

to the afternoon session on the place of the library in adult education. Following Dr. Messick's address we heard an unusually fine presentation of what the farm women of North Carolina want in the way of library service. This was presented by Mrs. W. R. Bullock, of Bethel, N. C., and is elsewhere in this issue. Following Mrs. Bullock Miss Nancy Gray, Librarian of Wilson County Library, presented an illustrated discussion of ways to encourage reading and use of books and libraries.

A NATIONAL PLAN FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Summarized by Janie Allsbrook,
Librarian, Edgecombe County

The "National Plan for Public Library Service," published by the American Library Association*, is presented in three principal parts: first, we have the ideals of dynamic library service in Chapter I contrasted with present-day realities in Chapter 2; Chapters 3 through 7 give us the core of the plan and outline a proposed system of public libraries and integrated library functions designed to provide a high level of service throughout the nation; Chapters 8 through 12 implement the basic scheme by consideration of a number of related topics—library collections, personnel, buildings and citizen interest.

I should like to give you the high lights of this important plan as brief-

*American Library Association. Committee on post-war planning. "National Plan For Public Library Service"; prepared by Carlton B. Joeckel and Amy Winslow; with a chapter by Lowell Martin. (Planning for Libraries, No. 3). A. L. A., 1948. \$3.00.

ly as possible. The National Plan is required reading for all librarians. Let me urge you to get a copy and read it for yourself.

Chapter 1 entitled *The Potential Role of the American Public Library* shows us the picture as it should be. The American public library fits into the American adult educational system as does no other institution. Its function is to mediate between seekers for knowledge and the recorded materials which contain and promote knowledge. It attempts both to promote enlightened citizenship and to enrich personal life.

How can the American public library best realize its full potentialities as an intelligence center for all the people? This service objective can be accomplished by providing suitable materials, by distributing these materials, and by helping people use needed materials. These elements of effective library service deserve further comment. In providing suitable materials we should remember that there are four levels of required materials needed in practically every American community. They are—sources of information on topics of general interest (national affairs, for example) and significant books of contemporary literature including local interest material; research or scientific materials; specialized material on hobbies, personal problems, vocations, etc.; and the popular level or material for leisure time interests. It is important that these materials be distributed through branches, traveling collections, and bookmobiles to people especially in their clubs and associations. The librarian helps the search by arranging materials in the library to reflect community interests using such topics as *Home Life, Vocations, Hobbies*; by analyzing ma-

terials through the card catalog, book annotations and subject cataloging; and by giving personal aid which takes into consideration the readers purpose, interest, reading level and background.

In addition to these ingredients of effective library service every library should have a clear sense of purpose, a sense of the reading process, and a sense of community identification. A clear sense of purpose means a conscious dedication of resources to such specific objectives as—changing the indifference and ignorance of the individual as a voting citizen, promoting tolerance by means of knowledge concerning peoples, promoting appreciation of the cultural output of the twentieth century, and fostering intelligence in consumers. It is important to limit goals so that service will be unified and concentrated under the banner of purpose. A sense of the reading process starts with knowledge of the contents of printed materials, takes shape with knowledge of readers, grows with knowledge of how printed materials are used in the community, and reaches maturity when the effects of reading are known. The understanding of reading is the dynamic quality lacking in many static libraries. Librarians must know content and readers thoroughly. A sense of community identification is achieved when the library enters into that life beyond the individual and family sphere. One test of the effectiveness of a community library is the extent to which not only the individual but the group life of the community can be grasped by watching the library in action.

The unit result is not spectacular—merely an individual seated in the library or in his home, absorbing wisdom and beauty from a book suited to his interests and abilities, but multi-

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

plied a thousand fold in every section of the country the result is significant in the eternal search for personal fulfillment and a better group life.

Now for the picture as it really is in Chapter 2: Taking Stock of the American Public Library. In this chapter we learn that there are serious deficiencies in present-day library service, 35 million or one-fourth the people of the U. S. have no public libraries; most public library units are too small in population served, total income and income per capita; book collections, personnel and buildings are inadequate. This postwar plan recognizes these deficiencies and proposes a pattern of organization designed to strengthen service in action. The essential features of such a plan are presented in Chapter 3 under the heading Patterns of Local Organization.

The goal of the National Plan is to bring into the life of every American an adequate, purposeful public library. The National Plan says that this can be done more effectively through larger local units of service working through local, state, and federal governments. The plan calls for 1,200 library units with a minimum annual income of \$37,500 for a population of 25,000. This would represent 1.50 per capita as against .52 per capita for the United States in 1946, and .30 per capita for North Carolina in 1946. The larger units chosen should suit the region and pre-existing pattern of library organization. Some types of units are: independent municipal libraries in larger cities; county libraries for rural areas like North Carolina; and regional libraries for two or more counties.

Chapter 4 is on the Role of the State in Public Library Development.

We learn that the general objectives of the state library program are to systematize public library service and to put good libraries within reach of all the people by insuring a strong legal foundation for its libraries, furnishing dynamic leadership, providing an integrated system of auxiliary services supplementing the facilities of local libraries, helping local units secure financial aid, and striving continuously to improve the quality of its public library personnel through certification laws and regulations.

Chapter 5 emphasizes National Responsibilities for Public Library Service. The federal government, says the National Plan, should play an important but auxiliary role. It should aid public libraries through important services and subsidies, but it should not attempt to control local library service. The goal of the federal government is to raise the national level of library service, to aid in the advancement of public libraries as unique instruments of education, and to work through state and local governments to achieve a cooperative partnership in library development.

Chapter 6 stresses Coordination of Library Service. In connection with the organization of larger units of library service the systematic coordination of existing library functions and resources should take place. The National Plan says that public libraries should cooperate actively with other public libraries and also other types of libraries such as school, college and university, and special libraries. How? Libraries can do this by specializing in certain subjects or types of materials and by sharing both materials and services with libraries and users in a certain region. Some of the services and projects that could be shared are: the

book collection, reference and information service, reader's adviser, children's librarian, traveling book repair specialist, and a public relations program with joint use of traveling exhibits and posters. Cooperation between the public library and the college library in the same town involves determining their respective fields of specialization and emphasis in building up their book collections, avoiding unnecessary duplication, and reciprocity in circulation privileges. As for school libraries and public libraries, the goal here should be to provide a coordinated and complete service to school children without unnecessary duplication of activities. Each must see clearly its own role in a combined pattern of services to children and young people; likewise, each must understand and respect the role of the other.

In Chapter 7 on Public Library Finance we are reminded that the National Plan rests on adequate financing and that adequate financing rests on sound legislation to provide the same and assure continuity of service. What is needed is a minimum per capita library expenditure of \$1.50 with the goal set at \$3.00 per capita. This means \$200 million annually for a nation-wide public library system distributed 60 percent to local units, 25 percent to states, and 15 percent to federal government. Local units were \$50 million short in 1946 since they spent \$70 million instead of \$120 million. \$500 million is needed for new and reconditioned buildings, \$175 million for new and replenished book stock (at 2.50 per volume). The importance of the budget is stressed as the key to the successful financial administration of libraries.

Chapter 8 on Books and Library

Materials brings out some possible changes in collections of books and other materials in the large unit library. More books, especially more non-fiction, will be made more readily available through an effective system of cooperation between libraries. There will be large scale duplication of standard paper-bound books and pamphlets to be given away or exchanged for similar material with no charging record kept for this type of material. There will be a greatly increased emphasis on non-book materials such as: pictorial and graphic materials; recordings of music, poetry, plays and speeches; educational films; microfilms of newspapers and books not readily available in print. A change in policy will mean a change in collection as the emphasis switches from recreational objectives to education objectives.

Chapter 9 on Personnel of Post-war Libraries tells us that what is needed is a library staff fully qualified to fit books and materials to specific reader needs and to create and foster a desire for reading and information. In other words, a new concept of librarianship is needed. The librarian must be more than a mere dispenser of books with one eye fixed nervously on circulation figures. The emphasis in library service should be on quality rather than quantity. Some essential qualifications of the public librarian, present and future, are: the librarian must have a vision of the libraries place in society and its relationship to other libraries and other social institutions; the librarian must have a high level of general and professional education which will enable him to play a positive educational role as a leader in the integration of books and community needs; and the

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

librarian must combine book knowledge with active community participation. This role calls for imagination, vision, initiative, fearlessness, self-confidence—an outgoing personality with true interest in and understanding of people and sympathy with their needs and abilities. To repeat, the librarian must know books and people and how to get the two together. As Pearl Buck says: "Librarians cannot consider their work done until they have books in the hands of readers and until they have the contents of these books in the minds and thinking of citizens."

Chapter 10 on The Public Library Building Program tells us that there is a new trend in library architecture based on a definite purpose to fit the library building to the essential functions it performs. The following principles are important: the library building should be easily accessible and attractive to readers; many public library buildings should be adaptable for expanded service in a county or regional system; and the public library building of the future should be planned and equipped as a modern education center.

Chapter 11 is about the Citizen and the Public Library. The American public library is an expression of democracy in action. If library planning is to succeed at any level of government, active citizen support is needed. The relationship between the citizen and his public library is a mutual obligation between two parties to a jointly useful contract. The library exists to serve the citizen as an individual or a member of many different groups. The citizen, on his part, may aid the library as an individual, trustee or organization member. We are reminded that the trustee role is of great importance in

developing efficient library service. With the chief librarian, the trustees are responsible for the formulation of library objectives and policies and the presentation of the libraries fiscal needs to tax-levying agencies. Friends of Library organizations are effective in helping interpret the public library program to the community and state and helping libraries get financial aid.

Chapter 12 on Research tells us that the results of investigation in the following important areas of public library research will add greatly to the efficient operation of libraries and may change existing concepts of the purpose of public libraries: government relations of public libraries; units and areas of library service; public library finance; internal administration of libraries; personnel administration; service to readers in all its aspects; and books and reading interests.

In conclusion we are reminded that although a national plan, this plan places primary responsibility on the local library unit. As the plan is changed and adapted to fit local needs, it is hoped that the principles upon which it is founded will have general application throughout the nation.

COLLEGE LIBRARY WORKSHOP

The College and Reference Section of the North Carolina Library Association initiated a movement for a Workshop. The School of Library Science of the University of North Carolina was asked to conduct such a workshop. The General Education Board made a grant to the School for this purpose. The members of the University Library Staff gave gen-

NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

erously of their time to make the Workshop a success.

The Workshop was held July 26-30, 1948 in the Naval Armory Building at Chapel Hill. Miss Blanche McCrum was Chief Consultant. Mr. Alfred M. Githens spent one day talking to the group, holding group and individual consultations. The University Library Staff gave a tea for all participants in the Workshop on their first day in Chapel Hill. Duke University Library invited the participants over to see their libraries and their Staff Association served tea.

One hundred and four persons at-

tended the Workshop, librarians from North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. Miss Akers, Dr. Wilson, and Mr. Kellam were the Committee who planned the Workshop. Miss Gertrude Merritt and Mr. Ehlhardt of Duke University and Miss Faison were consultants. The group leaders were from the three states represented and included Mr. Rush, Mr. Kellam and Mr. Copeland. Miss Eva Grice served as Librarian for the Workshop. Mrs. N. B. Adams is preparing the Report of the Workshop, copies of which will be sent to all those who participated in it.

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