

A BACKWARD GLANCE: TWO EARLY LIBRARY REPORTS

With an introduction by MARGARET H. LIGON*

Early in January, when plans were being made for the eightieth birthday celebration of Pack Memorial, we had occasion to look back through old minute and record books for comparative figures. A number of interesting facts were recorded, and it was noticeable that Asheville went all out to entertain the American Library Association and the North Carolina Library Association in May, 1907. Committees were appointed and plans were made for hospitable entertainment. The sum of \$50.00 was set aside by the Board for this mammoth undertaking, and the reception expenses included \$6.50 for tables and chairs, \$11.00 for music, \$17.50 for ice cream and \$2.00 for a carriage for the musicians. The Board also voted that the expenses of Lt. Governor, Francis D. Winston, in the amount of \$21.25 be paid. According to the minutes, Lt. Governor Winston came to Asheville to address the Association and to welcome visitors on behalf of the South. Another item of interest in the treasurer's report is the expenditure of \$2.65 which provided library substitutes in order that the librarians might attend the conferences. It was apparent that everyone had a good time and the local committees functioned throughout in a capable and hospitable manner.

The Southeastern Library Association will convene in Asheville in October, 1960, and I am wondering how our expenses will compare with those of the early National convention.

Two other items of interest are the informal reports of the Librarian of that period: One on the fourth annual meeting of the North Carolina Library Association in Greensboro in 1908 and the joint meeting with the Southern Educational Association in Charlotte in 1909. These reports were not part of the minutes and, I think, were written for her own personal use in making her report to the Library Board. From the standpoint of a public librarian, some of the problems she noted are still problems today. It is nothing to have a class of fifty or more descend on the Library with the same assignment without any previous warning.

The reports of Miss Grace McHardy Jones, later Mrs. Oscar Mauldin of Greenville, South Carolina, read as follows:

REPORT OF GREENSBORO CONVENTION

The fourth annual meeting of the North Carolina Library Association convened in Greensboro November 12, 1908 at 3:00 P.M., Miss Annie Petty, of the Normal, presiding in the enforced absence of the President, Mrs. Ross of Charlotte.

The sessions were held in the attractive auditorium of the new Carnegie Library. In regard to this building, let me say that when I entered its inviting portals, my first thought was, "Oh if I could only transport our Committee, in a body, to this ideal little Library, Asheville would soon be the proud possessor of one quite as nice on that corner lot on Church Street." However, in the midst of my envy of Greensboro's beautiful *Treasure House* for her books came the consoling reflection that *we* have the *books*, our library being twice as full as theirs!

But let us return to the meeting, and not keep Miss Petty and little Dr. Louis Wilson (the able secretary) in anxiety lest we important (?) folk fail to appear!

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NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

The minutes of the Asheville meeting were read, reports made, and business begun. The most important subject under discussion was the place to establish a "Library Commission" for North Carolina. This was attempted last year, but the bill was presented to the Legislature so late that nothing was accomplished.

A committee was appointed to look into the matter again and to lay the bill before the next session. Said bill is, in brief, as follows: Library Commission to be composed of five persons including the State Librarian and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Object of this Commission is to give as much assistance as possible to all libraries in the State, especially those struggling for existence. For this purpose a paid Secretary must be employed, someone thoroughly conversant with Library matters in general. Annual appropriation asked is \$1500. Offices in Raleigh. No member of the Commission to receive any remuneration, except of course the Secretary, save when traveling on Commission business, and then mere expenses to be paid.

The next subject for discussion was "The Library and the School," showing what a power for good the city library can be, in regard to the children.

Meeting adjourned in time for interesting visits to the Libraries at the Normal and the Greensboro Female College.

The evening was devoted to a most delightful lecture, by Dr. Stephen Weeks, on "Some North Carolina Incunabula and Association Books," during the course of which he exhibited a number of books from his own fine collection, among them the *first* laws and *first* geological report printed in our State; also an old book which had been the property of Edward Mosely long before the Revolution, and another that had belonged to Gabriel Johnson and contained his beautiful book-plate.

The second, and last, day of the meeting was given up to the round table discussion of many points concerning library management, such as fines, reference work for schools, clubs, etc., arrangement of pamphlets, bulletins or current events and general routine business, and Election. Miss Petty, Vice President, was made President.

After adjournment a beautiful luncheon was served, and then the august body of delegates was driven out to Guilford Battle Ground, there to live over again with Major Morehead the famous old "battle which made Yorktown possible."

Since my return, a letter has come saying that Miss Petty has appointed me a member of the Executive Board. That *sounds* large, but it really does not amount to much, except that it shows we are recognized a little bit more than we were last year, when Mrs. Ross failed to call for our report, and that at a time when they were guests of our own town!

(Signed) Grace McH. Jones
Librarian

The Southern Educational Association assembled in Charlotte Dec. 28, 1909 for what proved to be a most enjoyable and instructive meeting of three days duration.

Big pedagogical guns, not only from the South, but from the North, boomed learned utterances forth apparently as easily and with as much gusto, as they later replenished the necessary material ammunition at the well-served tables of the Hotel Selwyn.

There was the jovial Judson of Chicago, and learned Dabney of Tennessee; jolly Pres. Mitchell of the South Carolina University and the revered Eliot of Harvard, to say nothing of the cohorts of State and City Superintendents of Education. High in the estimation of their fellow-workers we were delighted to see our former Sup. J. D. Eggleston now in charge of education in Va., and our present incumbent R. J. Tighe, whose able responses and papers added greatly to the various programs.

We librarians had little part or lot in the general programs, which caused us much indignation. Our shining lights were hidden and forced to glimmer only on the elect few, as the Department of Libraries held its meetings separately. True, all the departments are so arranged in the S.E.A., for instance the Dept. of Child Study, of Elementary Education and so on, but they also have representation on the general programs. So one protest is this—that all of our papers were read only among ourselves, none were placed on the big programs, which was not fair to the Librarians of the South. For instance, Dr. Louis Wilson of Chapel Hill, Pres. of the N.C.L.A. gave us a splendid paper on "The Public Library as an Educator," which should have been read where it could have been generally enjoyed. This separation was particularly to be deplored as the main object of having a Dept. of Libraries in connection with the S.E.A. is to bring teacher and librarian more into unison with each other, and how can such an end be accomplished when we are shelved in a Carnegie Library, or isolated as though we were something violently contagious? The writer happened to breakfast one morning with the man who plans the programs, the all-powerful secretary, and laughingly voiced our sentiments in the matter. He was quite positive in his position that the Libraries had been given too much representation last year, and must this year take a back seat. He grudgingly concedes that one place may be assigned us next year to air in full assembly our deep-rooted convictions as to our work in the world.

Joking aside, I must say that from my double-stand point of teacher and librarian, I can see that the two do not work together nearly so much as they *could*, and *would* if the matter were more seriously considered.

Miss Mary Hannah Johnston, the very clever Nashville Librarian, seems to have solved this problem to an extent, for in her paper on "The Relation Between Library and School" she told us of the manner in which she has the High School pupils come to the Library, and she shows them all through, teaching them at least the few positive essentials needed for correct use of the "people's university." Miss Petty of the Greensboro Normal, has placed the entering wedge for a regular Library training there, by giving the girls lectures on the work.

Now in regard to the Asheville Library, your Librarian stands ready to aid the High School so far as lies in her power whenever it wishes her aid. For instance, she suggested some time since, to the former literature teacher, that essay subjects should be sent in previous to being given to the pupils so that material might be looked up for children beforehand, but the suggestion was overlooked.

Possibly our Board could formulate plans for making our Library more useful to the youth of the community.

Well, as I say, of course this was the main subject, but various others of much interest were brought up.

"The Values of the State Library" was ably discussed by Miss Sharo from Davidson College.

"The Traveling Library" proved most interesting as delineated by Mrs. Eugene Heard of Georgia, whose experience in circulating the libraries sent out by the Seaboard Air Line, renders her particularly good authority in regard to how the thing can be practically worked. Miss Grace Jones of Asheville was on for the discussion of this subject also.

Last, but not least, came the very excellent article upon the "Work of a Library Commission," by Miss Leatherman, the Secretary of the N. C. Library Commission.

The meetings were not large, but were enthusiastic, and of vital interest, so we trust that ere long the Department of Libraries may be able to hold its own with any educational body in this broad and enlightened land. (Signed) Grace McH. Jones