

ories. We can be a tremendous influence when Harrisonburg needs us.

For all her gifts to us and her untiring investment in us we owe our Alma Mater a debt we can never repay, but all her "daughters loyal one in heart and one in will" like to feel that we can pay *interest* pressed down and running over.

FRANCES M. MACKEY

THE NEED FOR LIBRARIES IN THE SOUTH

One of the fields in which the South has long been behind the rest of the country is that of library development. The facilities for providing library service for the people of Dixie, where such facilities exist at all, are greatly inferior to those in the North and West. In a large percentage of the former Confederacy they are non-existent. Consequently there is a great opportunity for some person or some group to take hold of the situation and by aggressive and sustained effort, to raise the standing of the South in this field to something like a reasonable level.

While it may appear that the present is perhaps not a particularly auspicious time for the discussion of this subject, such a view is hardly justified by the facts. Federal, state and local governments are retrenching in every possible way, and all types of governmental activity which are not regarded as absolutely essential are being curtailed or eliminated. Since our public men do not always realize the importance of libraries, they are sometimes prone to curtail appropriations to these agencies to an unwarranted degree.

Therefore it behooves all friends of library development to unite with a view to preventing disproportionate cuts at this time. And since there is reason to believe that the bottom has been reached and that we are shortly to begin the climb back to

prosperity, formation of citizens' committees in the various Southern States to create sentiment for improved library facilities would appear to be in order. Then when economic normalcy returns, those States will be in a position to develop their libraries in the way that they should be developed.

Four Southern states already have inaugurated these citizens' movements, but it is only in North Carolina that tangible progress has been made. In the Tar Heel State, library service has been initiated or expanded in four counties, two new library buildings have been erected, and funds have been raised for a book truck for the State Library Commission, all as a result of this effort. The other states in which beginnings have been made are South Carolina, Louisiana, and Texas.

It would not have been reasonable, of course, for the libraries to have attempted to escape all cuts during the period of retrenchment through which we have been passing. They have accepted slashes in their appropriations along with all other governmental agencies. What they have resisted and what they expect to resist in the future is any wholly unwarranted and excessive cut which would have a ruinous effect on their efficiency and their opportunity for usefulness to the communities which they serve.

Fortunately there is a central agency in the South through which the advocates of better libraries may operate. This is the Southeastern Library Association of Atlanta, an agency of the American Library Association. Miss Tommie Dora Barker, regional field agent for the South, has general charge, and is doing an excellent work in arousing this section to a realization of its need for better library facilities.

The association will hold a conference of leaders in library work at the University of North Carolina on April 7-8, at which time an effort will be made to formulate a long time program for the development of li-

library facilities below the Potomac. The results of this conference will be keenly watched, for it is being held at a crucial time, and much depends upon its success.

The potentialities of such a gathering as this may be partially grasped when it is pointed out that two-thirds of the inhabitants of the thirteen Southern States have no local public library service of any kind. It is obvious, then, that the movement is one of enormous importance to the South and to the nation. Much of the backwardness of the South may be traced to its high illiteracy rate, to the ignorance of a large proportion of its citizens. Proper library facilities would do much to raise the level of Southern citizenship.

It is a noteworthy fact that when a community which has been denied access to a library is given that access, it responds by making an ever-increasing use of the facilities provided. That, in general, has been the experience everywhere, and it has been especially true in Richmond. The progress of the Richmond Public Library since its opening in 1924 has been surprising even to librarians, for the number of volumes used annually and the number of persons patronizing the institution has grown each year with such leaps and bounds as to give that library a place with the three fastest growing larger libraries in the United States. The other two are those at Birmingham and Louisville.

Another excellent illustration of the manner in which a community will respond to library facilities is to be found in Greenville, S. C., where two public-spirited men provided the money for a city library. After the citizens had become convinced of the library's value, they voted a special tax to take care of it. The two philanthropists then donated a book automobile which furnished library service to the neighboring villages. Shortly thereafter the county, recognizing the importance of this service, also voted a special tax.

By 1932 the total book circulation for Greenville and the adjacent county of the same name was 511,316, and those in charge declare that the rural patrons of the library read more biography and history than is read by city people.

Another striking illustration of the manner in which the public responds to better library facilities is to be found in the statistics showing the results of grants to Southern libraries made by the Rosenwald Fund in 1929. In two years the total book circulation for those libraries jumped from 1,820,221 to 3,946,320, the urban increase being from 1,388,590 to 2,680,740, and the rural from 431,622 to 1,265,580. Figured by races, the statistics show a jump from 1,742,760 to 3,610,575 for whites, and from 77,452 to 335,745 for Negroes.

Here in Virginia the library situation is better than in some of the other Southern States, but it is far from what it should be. Sixty-nine counties are without local library service of any kind, and only ten libraries give service to Negroes. It is true that all of the cities of consequence have public libraries, with the exception of Alexandria, which has a library which is supported chiefly by subscriptions, but no Virginia library enjoys the \$1 per capita support which the American Library Association says is essential to satisfactory library service. The Virginia libraries with the highest per capita incomes last year were as follows:

Winchester, 95 cents; Lynchburg, 74 cents; Charlottesville, 56 cents; Danville, 48 cents; Richmond, 44 cents; Roanoke, 41 cents; Norfolk, 40 cents, and Petersburg, 38 cents.

It should be noted, however, that whereas sixty-nine Virginia counties have no local library service, the Virginia State Library mails books on request to all parts of the Commonwealth at no cost except return postage; the extension division of that library sends out traveling library units of

fifty volumes to schools, rural communities, and village and town libraries without cost; and the extension divisions of the University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Richmond mail books to residents in the rural districts for a nominal sum to cover postage and cost of packing.

This mail and package service to all parts of the state is of course of the greatest importance, but it is by no means the same thing as local library service. It is manifestly impossible to build up the book reading and book using habit on a wide scale through this method, and Virginia will not be able to take its place as a "library state" until local service is made available much more generally than it now is.

The writer was hopeful some years ago that the General Assembly could see its way clear to give a substantial increase to the State Library Extension Division, in order that it might expand its field of service and conduct its operations on a suitable scale. Those were the days of Coolidge-Mellon

prosperity, and there was no reason why some of the lucre in the State Treasury could not have been allotted to this work. It was not done, however, and the annual appropriation for the division never got above \$3,500. Recent cuts have brought it considerably below that figure.

But despite the distressingly small budget allotted it, the division is carrying on to the best of its ability. Elsewhere throughout the South librarians are doing what they can under adverse conditions. Owing to unemployment, the demand for their books is greater than ever before, but they are having to meet this increase with reduced budgets. However, they are making the best of a difficult situation. When prosperity returns it is to be hoped that the South will reward them by providing such appropriations for libraries as will enable this region to take its place with those portions of the country where adequate libraries are recognized as being essential to the proper development of every civilized state.

VIRGINIUS DABNEY

STATUS OF LIBRARIES OF VIRGINIA ACCREDITED PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN RELATION TO THE STANDARDS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF THE SOUTHERN STATES—SESSION 1931-32

Pupil Enrolment	Less than 100	100-200	200-500	500-1000	Over 1000
Number Libraries Checked	363	120	41	15	8
Number of Libraries Meeting Standards as to:					
Equipment	168	60	25	10	5
Books	234	114	28	10	7
Periodicals	31	72	12	3	3
Librarian's training	32	10	1	6	5
Librarian's time in the library	101	15	14	8	4
Appropriation	55	22	13	5	3
Courses in the use of the library	28	17	9	6	4

The data in the above table were compiled by Miss Ruth Budd, Professor of Library Science at the College of William and Mary, with the assistance of her students, from the high school library reports filed in the State Department of Education.