A History Of The Durham Public Library, 1895-1940

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Early Beginnings

The public library emerged in the United States as the result of a complex intermixture of forces. It is truly a child of the society from which it sprang; every municipality which established a library gave it a particular stamp of purpose and design. This article treats the pre-World War II years of the Durham Public Library. This library has particular significance for North Carolina because it was the first free, tax-supported public library in the Southeast.[1] Moreover, the Durham community worked as a unit to establish their library and molded it to fit their conception of library service. Such action was unusual for the Southeast prior to 1900; most public libraries in this area owe their existence to the efforts of state library associations or to generous monetary grants from the Carnegie Corporation. Durham, however, can attribute its public library solely to the interest and industry of its citizens.

The early history of Durham's public library is somewhat difficult to reconstruct. As years pass, local history tends to follow legend rather than historical fact. Thus, the founding of the Durham Public Library is popularly attributed to Miss Lalla Ruth Carr, the daughter of the prominent and wealthy Julian Shakespeare Carr.[2] Although she was undoubtedly involved in the original planning, Miss Carr did not originate the idea for a public library; the honor should go to Professor Edwin Mims of Trinity College (now Duke University).

Mims belonged to a local literary club, the Canterbury, which had been established through the efforts of the faculty at Trinity. In 1895, this club desired a project to improve the social stature of Durham, and Mims suggested a public library. The idea was discussed until early 1896 when the club asked several prominent scholars and businessmen to write

public letters in support of its movement.[3] It is now impossible to determine how many citizens responded to this plea for public letters, but two are still available. Both letters give insight into the community's conception of public library service and are quoted in part below.

One of the surviving letters came from Robert L. Flowers, a mathematics professor at Trinity. His concern was with the cultural development of the South, and he viewed the public library as a boon to intellectual development. Witness the following excerpt from his letter:

> The lack of libraries has been one of the retarding elements in the intellectual development of the South. We must confess that in library culture, the North has surpassed us. New England has been the seat of culture, and the birthplace of our best American literature. There are many things that have tended to make this so, but certainly one reason has been that in every town as soon as the church and school house were founded, a library was established. We love the churches and schools, and now we need the library.[4]

Flowers may have been somewhat inaccurate in his conception of library development in the North, but he clearly believed that a public library was necessary for the cultural and intellectual development of a community.

A different concern is voiced in the letter of Julian Carr, a man who constantly immersed himself in projects which contributed to the general welfare and social stature of Durham. The excerpt from his letter demonstrates a strong sense of civic pride and explains his generosity toward the public library during its early years:

> ...I can be counted on, in season and out of season to promote any movement that gives promise of good to the welfare of my town and my people.
>
> What is the situation? In one sense our educational facilities are worthy of any community. Every citizen in town is in love, and very justly so, with our magnificent Graded School system, and we scarcely know how to say enough of what is good concerning Trinity College, a grand beacon of light that is reflected from Manteo to Cherokee.
>
> Besides these noble institutions, is the Watts Hospital, another great civilizer and promoter of the true and the beautiful, and the establishment of which will hand down to posterity the name of the most beautiful temples dedicated to the worship of God of any place in the State; certainly we can claim the most public spirited citizenship in the State, and yet what the despised Nazarene said to the young man of the Scripture comes to me in double force respecting this community, to wit — 'Yet one thing thou lackest.' In spite of all our advantages and accomplishments, we cannot flatter ourselves that we approach to the full measure of what we ought to be as a Christian community until we can boast of a public library — in name and in fact.[5]

Carr's letter demonstrates the pride citizens took in their community, and shows that the public library could be a symbol of culture and progress. He mentions several other public projects that preceded the library and also reflected well on Durham. It is obvious that his major concern is to enhance the reputation of his town.

The activities of the Canterbury Club and the letters published by Carr and Flowers inspired further discussion of a public library among the citizens of

Durham. Another club, the Social Science, appointed a committee to meet with the Canterbury in support of the idea. At this point, Lalla Ruth Carr becomes the leading force in the public library movement. She secured the County Court House for a public meeting on the night of April 30, 1896. Despite the fact that rain poured down that evening, a large crowd gathered to hear leading citizens make speeches. At the meeting, Julian Carr, in the name of his daughter Lalla, announced the donation of a lot worth $2,500 on the corner of Main and Green (now Chapel Hill) Streets (at Five Points), and Thomas H. Martin added a strip of adjoining property to widen the site. Cash subscriptions from the citizens at the meeting raised a total of $4,318. Most of this money came from people of modest circumstances; only one donation from an individual exceeded one hundred dollars. Local groups gave approximately $1,000 in support of the effort. This meeting began a month of activity that laid the groundwork for North Carolina's first tax-supported public library.[6]

On May 4, 1896, a Ladies' Auxiliary was formed in support of the new library. A twelve-member Board of Lady Managers headed the group, and they met with the trustees to plan a fund-raising drive as it appeared that the original contributions would be insufficient to meet the cost of the planned building.[7] A house-to-house canvass was organized in which the women worked in teams of two. This second effort raised an additional $1,573.75, enough to ensure the construction of the library.[8]

The Durham Public Library opened its doors to the public on either February 1 or February 8, 1898 (depending on whose account is believed);[9] it then began to receive a fifty-dollar monthly appropriation from the town's Board of Aldermen. Thus, Durham became the first town in the entire Southeast to charge no fee and also receive municipal funding.

The First Twenty-Five Years

At its opening, the Durham Public Library employed a Mrs. F. L. Weddell as librarian. Although the Durham city directories for this period list all residents over the age of sixteen, no person by the name of Weddell appears in any of them. The position of librarian was more that of a caretaker than anything else; responsibility for book selection lay with the Board of Lady Managers. This duty seems to have been delegated to the ladies by a Board of Trustees resolution. The Lady Managers held their first meeting on February 23, 1898, electing Mrs. A. G. Carr as President, and appointing a book selection committee composed of Carr, Mrs. L. L. Morehead, and Lalla Ruth Carr. Although the librarian, Mrs. Weddell, was not a member of the selection committee, she appears to have had some influence on the process. She attended one of the early Lady Managers' meetings to display several new books. Weddell requested that each of the ladies purchase one book, take it home to read, and then donate it to the Public Library. This suggestion was approved, but there is no indication as to whether or not this

procedure continued as a regular practice.[10]

The act to incorporate the Durham Public Library, passed by the North Carolina legislature in 1897, authorized the formation of a "Durham Public Library Association" for the purpose of aiding the maintenance of the library. The association would be permitted to collect a maximum of ten dollars annually as a membership fee to be sent to the Board of Trustees treasurer.[11] In September 1898, the Lady Managers formed such an association and invited all citizens to a reception for its promotion. At the reception, the objectives of the Library Association were explained, and a membership fee of one dollar was adopted. The number of people who chose to join as "friends of the library" has not been recorded.[12]

The first years of the library were bleak financially. The Board of Lady Managers constantly had to plan a variety of fund-raising projects to support the book budget. Public entertainment was one method utilized to supplement the city's appropriation; "The Temple of Fame" raised $46.45, "Echoes from the Operas" brought $102.75, and a "Kirmiss" earned $1,400. There is no record as to the persons who provided the entertainments. A benefit performance by a traveling stock company added $66.85, and several other projects contributed to the book fund.[13]

Money for books was not the only problem plaguing the new public library; the physical facilities were also inadequate. One and a half years after opening, the library must have been rather sparsely furnished. A new alcove for reading had just been opened, but the librarian had to make the following tactful plea:

> ...we would be glad if the trustees would see fit to give us more light on the books. Some of the alcoves are almost in darkness, which makes it rather awkward, both for visitors and librarians.[14]

The generous contributions by individuals such as Thomas B. Fuller, Julian S. Carr, and Mrs. Eugene Morehead helped the library through this early austere period.[15]

In either the latter months of 1899 or the beginning of 1900, Miss Sally Henderson succeeded Mrs. Weddell as librarian. While librarian, she married and became Sally Rogers. She remained in the position until 1911 when Durham hired its first professionally trained librarian. The published accounts of the library refer to this thirteen-year period as either apathetic or poor.[16] According to various sources, holdings were between 3,600 and 4,500 during the entire period; circulation increased from approximately 10,000 to 12,000 a year in 1900 to 28,310 by 1910; and Durham's Board of Aldermen raised their appropriation fifty percent to nine hundred dollars a year. The only schedule of service hours in existence from this early period is from the year 1907. The library was reported as being open from ten a.m. to one p.m., three p.m. to seven p.m., and eight p.m. to ten p.m.[17]

How good or bad was the service provided by the Durham Public Library during these early years? Certainly the descriptions of "poor" and "apathetic" are too strong. Durham ranked first among the major North Carolina

cities[18] in per capita circulation, and second in percentage of citizens registered as borrowers. These figures should at least negate the misconception of apathy. Durham, however, lagged behind the other big cities of North Carolina in volumes held and per capita expenditure on library services, ranking last and second to last respectively. Considering the fact that Durham had no professionally trained librarian, and that the library depended mostly on its citizens' generosity to replenish the book supply, library service up to 1911 was adequate. The library seems to have functioned well with the resources at hand.

The Durham Public Library embarked upon a new era in June 1911 when it hired Lillian Griggs as head librarian. Under her leadership the library gained a new concept of service and began to expand its efforts to reach the community. As a result, the first branch library was established in early 1915 in West Durham, a mill section of the town. Later that same year, Griggs stated her views that county residents should have the same opportunity as city residents to enjoy the public library. She advocated the opening of all city libraries to the population of the entire county.[19]

By 1915, the library received nearly $2,000 in funding from city and county appropriations. The growth in both funding and service put severe pressures on the building that housed the Durham library, and in her annual report for 1915, Griggs reported the facilities as inadequate to serve both city and county residents.[20] Within half a year of Griggs' report, planning for new library facilities had begun. On June 9, 1916, the library's Board of Trustees met with a committee from the Durham Board of Aldermen and proposed to request a grant of $40,000 from the Carnegie Corporation. This corporation had built over 1,500 libraries in the United States for cities willing to support a library through annual appropriations. Durham hoped to become a recipient of Carnegie's munificence also.[21]

On September 14, 1917, the Carnegie Corporation approved a $32,000 grant for Durham. The approval came none too soon as only two months later Carnegie's program of library construction came to an end. The wartime demand for money, labor, and materials precluded new public construction, and the grants were not resumed after the war.[22] Durham then sold its old library building to raise further capital and relocated in the Dining Room of the Lochmoor Hotel while the new building was under construction.

Durham opened its new public library on July 6, 1921. The building was in the colonial style with cream tapestry brick and columns of old ivory. The main room was divided between the children's and adults' sections and contained a fireplace. The basement had storage space and a club room. Durham was now prepared to provide greatly improved library service to its community.

Lillian Griggs did not remain long in her new building. In 1923 she resigned her position to become Secretary, and later Director of the North Carolina Library Commission. She was replaced by her former cataloger, Clara

Crawford, as Durham's librarian. Crawford had been with the library several years and was well acquainted with Griggs' progressive ideas regarding service to the community. She held the position of Head Librarian from 1923 until her retirement in 1959. During this thirty-six year span, Crawford fought continually for improved library service and for larger appropriations from the Durham city and county governments.

The Pre-Depression Years of Crawford

The interest that Lillian Griggs had demonstrated in county library service also inspired Crawford. "That Durham's library should be a county unit ... serving equally the rural and urban population, has been my fondest dream for many years," she said soon after becoming Head Librarian. On a practical level, the problem was to find an economical and efficient method of providing such service.

During the early 1920s, rural library service through the use of bookmobiles was still a novelty. The first instance of readers' borrowing books from a traveling vehicle was in Warrington, England, in 1859. The Mechanics' Institution in that town had inaugurated a horse-drawn "perambulating library" for the working classes.[23] This initial experiment, however, seems to have been an isolated one. Bookmobiles did not appear on a permanent basis until the twentieth century.

In mid-1923, just before Crawford became Head Librarian, there were only six bookmobiles in the United States. Hagerstown, Maryland had initiated this service in 1905 with a horse-drawn carriage traveling around Washington County. The first motorized library (and second bookmobile in the U.S.) began operation in 1916 at Plainfield, Indiana; several other towns followed suit soon afterward.[24] The fact that Durham soon joined this list was quite accidental. One hot July day in 1923, Lillian Griggs chose to lunch in a downtown cafeteria rather than walk home. By chance she encountered the Durham County Superintendent of Education (also on the Library Board of Trustees) and the President of the Kiwanis Club. The three ate lunch together and discussed county library service. Griggs told about the progress made with bookmobiles in other parts of the country and sufficiently impressed the two men with her knowledge of this new method of service. The upshot of the luncheon conversation was a promise by the Kiwanis President that his club would provide a book truck if the County Superintendent could ensure an appropriation for its operation.[25] The bookmobile was to be Griggs' last major contribution to the Durham Public Library. Although she arranged for the donation of the bookmobile, the service itself was developed by Crawford who became Head Librarian in late 1923.

The Durham Kiwanis Club presented the public library with a Ford truck which had four doors on each side, closing over wooden shelves. It could carry up to six hundred volumes at one time. The first trip occurred on October 17, 1923, and initiated a rapid

growth in county circulation. The original plan was to have the truck visit all thirty-six county schools, leaving a selection of books chosen by the schoolteachers. The teachers allowed children to take home books they liked, and also sent home books for their parents. In this manner, the county teachers acted as sub-librarians and encouraged circulation of library books among both the county children and adults. The librarian tried to talk with parents as often as possible at parent-teacher meetings and other community gatherings to educate them regarding the available service.[26]

For three years the library utilized the county school system to circulate books. The school system, however, underwent a consolidation, reducing the number of schools from thirty-six to eleven. This action curtailed the effectiveness of the book circulation plan. While the initial effort had been successful, it did not reach the goals Crawford desired. She had hoped to: (1) send the truck to every farmhouse with interested white readers; (2) hire an assistant for the County Librarian; and (3) receive an appeal for help from the city schools when their officials saw the good job done in the county.[27]

In a rare case of munificence, the city and county governments provided funds to extend county service in 1926. The city increased its annual appropriation to $1,900, and the county contributed an additional $1,000.[28] The extra funding allowed the library to begin the house-to-house service that Crawford desired. The County Librarian and her driver spent a week exploring the rural roads and counting houses in an attempt to plan various routes. They designed eighteen different routes; when service began, they traveled five days a week between eight a.m. and twelve-thirty p.m.[29]

The first house-to-house trip began on September 13, 1926. The reactions of rural residents were quite varied; some showed an enthusiastic delight for this opportunity, others were totally indifferent, and

> ...in some cases (there was) antagonism from a few people who feared for their soul's welfare if a novel — anathema of Satan — be allowed to enter their homes. [30]

Many of the people were suspicious of the bookmobile. They though the librarian would leave a book, then return later and collect a dollar for it. The extended service, though, was a success. In its first five trips, the bookmobile visited 116 homes and lent 131 books.[31] If there was no one at home, the librarian left a handbill advertising the new service. Rural delivery became a substantial aid to county circulation.

With the advent of house-to-house delivery, the Durham Public Library reaffirmed its status as an innovative leader among North Carolina's public libraries. It was the first free, tax-supported library (1898), one of the first to begin county service (1914), the first to utilize a bookmobile (1923), and the first to initiate rural house-to-house delivery (1926). For years afterward, North Carolina was the national leader in number of bookmobiles in service. In the words of Clara Crawford, "no excuse for ignorance remains. Opportunity for

knowledge is not only knocking at the doors; it is honking at the front gate."[32]

When the county service provided by the bookmobile had become sufficiently regularized, Clara Crawford turned her attention to another service in need of improvement: the children's department. Clara Crawford most likely considered herself as a qualified children's librarian. In 1923, shortly after she became Head Librarian, she applied for jobs as Children's Librarian at the Houston (Texas) Public Library and the Jacksonville (Florida) Public Library. She also wrote an article on storytelling in the home, emphasizing its importance as the beginning of "moral, ethical, religious, and educational training."[33] Crawford obviously was interested in children, and she worked to provide Durham's young people with the best facilities the library could afford.

In her 1925 annual report, Crawford began advocacy of improving the children's collection, which at that time had only 568 books. In 1926 she first mentioned the need for a special librarian to work with children, and in 1927 she devoted the major portion of the annual report to children's needs. In this report, Crawford outlined five duties such an assistant would have in addition to coordinating activities with the public schools: (1) assisting children in reference work for school assignments; (2) choosing proper reading material for children when a teacher has authorized the librarian to substitute for books on an approved list; (3) educating high school students in the use of the card catalog; (4) organizing vacation reading clubs to help children maintain the reading habit over the summer; and (5) supervising the children's room at the library, and selecting new books with the available funds. Her concern increased in 1928 as the circulation of juvenile books dropped steadily. From a 1924 total of 25,000, it declined to 23,000 in 1925, 22,000 in 1926, 21,000 in 1927, and 19,800 in 1928.[34]

Although neither the city officials nor the county officials would raise their appropriation for the library, Crawford decided to add the services of a Children's Librarian in January 1929. She hired Janie Beall McClure, an experienced children's librarian, to work full-time. McClure began several programs to create interest in the public library, and received good coverage from the local newspapers. She began story hours on weekends, started a vacation reading club, and began a picture library for the children. During her first year, McClure made 242 talks to classes in the local schools, inviting all students to make use of the library's facilities. The library's Board of Trustees authorized the spending of $1,200 to replace the old and worn books that comprised the children's collection, thus putting a new face on the small supply of books. Circulation of juvenile literature rose again to its 1924 level, completely reversing the declining trend of the previous four years.[35]

Hiring Janie McClure did not fulfill all Crawford's goals for the children's collection. Her next objective was the furnishing of a separate room for children. Librarians believed that children should have a room to themselves with an outside entrance.

There would be no chance then for children to wander into the adult section. Crawford expressed such a belief in her 1925 annual report:

> ...naturally enough they (children) drifted over into the adult department where are to be found good, almost bad, and indifferent novels (a Public Library must have books to interest all types in its community). Here the child is at a loss, the good, is apt to be too mature, the almost bad, incomprehensible, so an indifferent story is chosen — here is perhaps an exciting tale, no literary, no moral, no esthetic values. One or two such books may do no harm — but they can do no good — and once the habit is established literary tastes are destroyed and the library eventually loses that child as a reader.[36]

The Durham Public Library had a storage room downstairs that had been originally designed as a children's room, but Crawford estimated that $3,200 would be needed to adequately finish and equip it for such use. Her pleas went unheeded, though, and the city council refused to appropriate extra money to refurbish the storage room. By 1930 Durham was the only major city in North Carolina that had no separate children's room in its public library. This need brought the city's women's clubs together in a drive to establish a children's room without the city's aid.[37]

The children's room became a reality in 1930 through the generosity of the Kiwanis Club. In June of that year, the Kiwanians voted to donate up to $1,500 to refurnish the downstairs storage room. Because there was an entrance to the downstairs room from the front hall, the children did not have to pass through the adult area. A quick rise in juvenile circulation occurred at the Main Library; the room opened in early August 1930, and circulation rose from 25,000 in 1929 to 34,000 in 1930.[38]

The pre-Depression years of Clara Crawford were a mixture of success and failure. While important improvements in service brought more people to the library than ever, the Durham Public Library did not reach as great a percentage of the population as before. Despite Crawford's pleas, the city and county governments would not increase their appropriations enough for Durham to maintain parity with other public libraries of equal size in North Carolina. The improvements in the children's collection were due to the generosity of the Kiwanis Club, as was the beginning of the bookmobile service. All in all, it had been a difficult period; the coming depression was to make the next few years even more difficult.

The Effects of the Depression

The decision to hire the Children's Librarian in January 1929 occurred at an inopportune time. By the end of the year, the Durham Public Library had overspent its budget by $2,398.13, fifteen percent more than it had received. At the beginning of 1930, of course, no one realized the magnitude of the effects that the 1929 stock market crash would have. The deficit apparently did not daunt Crawford; in her annual report for 1929 she listed all the needs of the library, including such extravagances as pictures, flowers, and pets.[39] This optimism was not evident in subsequent annual reports.

The first effect of the depression was a reduction of the extension service. In mid-1930, the Durham County Commissioners made a reduction in their annual appropriation to the library, cutting the sum from $6,000 to $5,250. Combined with the deficit of the previous year, the decline in income forced the library to withdraw deposits of books that had been placed at various camps and institutions around the city and county. No longer would there be service to Watts Hospital, the King's Daughters Home, the YMCA and YWCA camps, and the Women's Club Fresh Air Camp. In order to meet its obligations, the Public Library borrowed $1,500 from the Fidelity Bank. By the end of calendar year 1930, the deficit had been reduced $554.23 to a total of $1,843.90.[40]

The Durham County Commissioners struck their heaviest blow at the library in mid-1931. After nearly two years, the more permanent effects of the Depression had severely cut into county income from taxes. In an effort to reduce the size of their budget, the Commissioners slashed the library's annual appropriation to $3,000, half of what it had been in 1929. The library had to respond with severe cuts in both staff and service. The bookmobile collected all the books it had loaned and then ceased operations. As of September 1, 1931, the library released both the Children's Librarian and the County Librarian. After that date, one person attempted to fulfill the duties of Children's Librarian, County Librarian, and Cataloger. The amount spent on books and periodicals declined 27 percent from the previous year, and by the end of calendar year 1931, the deficit dropped to $1,510.89.[41]

The fact that budgets had to be cut was understandable to most people in 1931. What was unacceptable, however, was the attitude shown by some of the County Commissioners toward the library. County Commission Chairman, C. W. Massey, and another commissioner, C. R. McHaney, were both outspoken in their criticism of the bookmobile. They felt that any residents who desired books should come to the library for them. One commissioner thought that each school in the county should be equipped with Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf of Books (*The Harvard Classics*), a dictionary, an encyclopedia, an almanac, and a copy of the Democratic Bible (whatever that was). "If they want any more books," he said, "let 'em buy 'em." The same sentiments also were expressed by an unidentified Durham city official. According to a quotation in the local newspaper, he said: "Books, we got enough books, and what does anybody want with any more? Those that can afford 'em buy 'em. Those as can't, ain't got any business with 'em."[42] As an editorial in the newspaper so aptly stated, Durham had been a leader with its innovative service, but now would be the leader in reduction of service.[43]

A second problem that plagued the Durham Public Library during the Depression was the physical state of the building and the surrounding grounds. During the first five years that Crawford had been Head Librarian, slightly over $3,000 was spent on the facilities. Sixty percent of it went for the addition of a balcony in the main room in 1926, which became the

reference area. The long list of needs found at the conclusion of her 1929 annual report went largely unmet. During the first several depression years, spending for repairs was held to a minimum. Much of the minor landscaping and repair work came through donations of labor and materials by Durham's social clubs.[44]

By 1936 the need for substantial repairs was obvious. The Durham City Building Inspector proclaimed the library's roof deteriorated beyond the point of repair; complete replacement would be necessary. The boiler in the furnace had a large hole that required constant attention to prevent water from entering the fire box, and the number of books had exceeded the total amount of available shelf space. The city and county governments agreed to allow Crawford to apply for a $22,500 Works Progress Administration grant for repairs and enlargement of the building, but they would not guarantee the required matching funds.[45]

Despite the obvious needs of the building, the County Commissioners were hesitant to support any additional funding for the library. In fact, they suggested that the Public Library be turned over to the school system. The library lost its WPA expansion grant because the County would not provide its share of the funding. The County Commissioners insisted that the necessary $27,500 would have to be approved by the voters in a bond referendum, and since a referendum would cost $3,000, the Commissioners decided not to hold one. The immediate problems were solved by extraordinary grants in 1936, 1937, and 1939 for repairs. The city and county allocated $6,032.75 in these years to replace both the furnace and the roof, paint the building inside and out, and to make other minor changes.[46]

By the end of the 1930s, the greatest problem was space. Books were first removed to the basement of the City Hall for storage; later the library secured an area of the Durham Warehouse in which to place book stacks. In January 1941, 5,500 books were kept in the warehouse, seventeen percent of the library's collection.[47] The first twenty years of the new library building indicated a pattern that would hold true for many years to come: money grudgingly allocated for stopgap repairs, but no funds for major expansion.

Improvement of service also suffered during the Depression. Where Durham had once been the leader, it now struggled to maintain a level previously reached. After a two-year hiatus, the bookmobile returned in 1933 on a limited schedule. Once again the Kiwanis Club initiated the improvement, devoting the money to recondition the truck. With a $600 appropriation, the truck could handle a part-time schedule again. By 1937, those County Commissioners who had opposed the bookmobile either changed their attitude or were replaced; in that year the County bought the library a new bookmobile. Unfortunately, the lack of funding and the shortage of personnel prevented the library from reaching the 1930 level of service; there was no one who could leave the library for the extended daily rural trips. The only other improvements were the reestablishment of evening hours, the

installation of an automatic charging machine, and the addition of a readers' advisory service.[48]

By 1937, the Great Depression had had a devastating effect on the Durham Public Library; the staff was reduced, the building had deteriorated, and the bookmobile was providing only minimal county service compared to the service it had given in 1929.

Conclusion

The forty-five years between 1895 and 1940 clearly show the Durham Public Library as one of the leaders among the public libraries in North Carolina. The movement to found the library preceded the establishment of regional and state organizations designed to aid communities in providing library service. It was the first tax-supported public library in the entire Southeast. Durham showed remarkable initiative in founding its library on the sole basis of local contributions. Today Durham's collection is still housed in the same building constructed in 1920. There has been little expansion and only minimal repair work. The greater part of the collection is in storage, severely hampering efficient service. Until the voters of Durham County pass a library construction bond issue, there is little hope that library service will be substantially improved.

NOTES

[1]Mary Edna Anders, *The Development of Public Library Service in the Southeastern States, 1895-1950* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1958), p. v, defines the Southeastern states as: Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. This paper will employ her definition.

[2]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1936*, p. 5; S. S. Bost, "General S. Carr," *North Carolina Library Bulletin* 5 (June 1924): 206.

[3]William Kenneth Boyd, *The Story of Durham, City of the New South* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1927), p. 262, places this meeting of the club in the year 1896, but a contemporary newspaper account puts it in June 1895, *DURHAM* (N.C.) *GLOBE,* March 26, 1896.

[4]Raleigh (N.C.) *NEWS AND OBSERVER,* March 27, 1896.

[5]*Ibid.,* March 22, 1896; *DURHAM GLOBE,* March 26, 1896.

[6] Raleigh *NEWS AND OBSERVER,* April 29, 1896, April 30, 1896, May 2, 1896, and May 3, 1896; *DURHAM* (N.C.) *RECORDER,* April 30, 1896.

[7]The Board of Lady Managers consisted of the wives of B. L. Duke, B. N. Duke, L. L. Morehead, A. G. Carr, L. A. Carr, J. A. Robinson, T. D. Jones, W. H. Branson, A. E. Lloyd, as well as Bessie Leak, Lalla Ruth Carr, and Cora Tyree, *DURHAM RECORDER,* May 7, 1896.

[8]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1936*, p. 6; the Raleigh *NEWS AND OBSERVER,* May 22, 1896 reports a sum of $1,900, and Boyd, *Story of Durham*, p. 263, reports $1,700. Since the *Annual Report, 1936* was written with the aid of minutes from the Board of Lady Managers, its figure is most likely to be correct.

[9]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1936*, p. 6, lists the opening as February 8, 1898; Boyd, *Story of Durham*, p. 263, gives February 1, 1898 as the date.

[10]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1936*, p. 7.

[11]*Private Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at its Session of 1897, begun and held in the City of Raleigh* on *Wednesday, the Sixth Day of January, 1897* (Winston, N.C.: M.I. & J.C. Stewart, 1897), p. 197.

[12]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1936*, p. 7.

[13]*Ibid.*, p. 8.

[14](Durham, N.C.) *MORNING HERALD*, October 13, 1899.

[15]Boyd, *Story of Durham*, p. 263.

[16]Wendell W. Smiley, *Library Development in North Carolina Before 1930* (Greenville, N.C.: East Carolina University Library, 1971), p. 88; Boyd, *Story of Durham*, p. 263.

[17]*DURHAM RECORDER*, January 19, 1899, and April 16, 1900; *MORNING HERALD*, Historical and Souvenir Edition, 1907 (no exact date given in paper); "Statistics of Libraries in North Carolina," *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY BULLETIN* 1 (June 1911): 84.

[18]The major North Carolina cities are herein defined as those with populations of over 15,000 according to the 1910 U.S. census. They are: Asheville, Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh, Wilmington, and Winston-Salem.

[19]Lillian Griggs, "Rural Library Extension," *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY BULLETIN*, 2 (March 1915): 95.

[20]"Libraries and Librarians in North Carolina — Durham," *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY BULLETIN* 3 (December 1915): 11.

[21]George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries; Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), p. 3.

[22]*Ibid.*, pp. 159-60, 216.

[23]C. R. Eastwood, *Mobile Libraries, and Other Public Library Transport* (London: Association of Assistant Librarians, 1967), p. 31.

[24]Eleanor Frances Brown, *Bookmobiles and Bookmobile Service* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1967), pp. 14-24.

[25]Clara M. Crawford, "County Service in Durham, North Carolina," *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY BULLETIN* 5 (June 1924): 204.

[26]*Ibid.*, pp. 204-05; Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1927*; Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, unidentified newspaper clipping dated May 19, 1929.

[27]Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, Clara Crawford, Librarian, to Mrs. J. H. Carmichael, Applicant for County Librarian position, undated draft of letter.

[28]"North Carolina Libraries and Librarians — Durham," *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY BULLETIN* 6 (September 1926): 185.

[29]Evie L. Allison, "Miss Kiwanis," *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY BULLETIN* 6 (March 1927): 227.

[30]*MORNING HERALD*, March 6, 1927.

[31]*Ibid.*, September 19, 1926.

[32]Mabel Martin Whedbee, "A History of the Development and Expansion of Bookmobile Service in North Carolina, 1923-1960," (M.S.L.S. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1962), p. iii; *MORNING HERALD,* March 6, 1927.

[33]Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, Julia Ideson, Librarian at Houston Public Library, to Crawford, November 14, 1923, and Joseph F. Marron, Librarian at Jacksonville Public Library, to Crawford, November 19, 1923; Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, Clara Crawford, "The Story Hour in the Home," undated (handwritten) paper. This last paper most likely was written for presentation to one of the Durham literary or women's clubs.

[34]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1925, 1926, 1927,* and *1928.*

[35]For accounts of McClure's activities, see the scrapbook of newspaper clippings from the period contained in Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files. Most clippings are not identified by newspaper of origin, but do contain dates. See also, Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1929.*

[36]*MORNING HERALD,* April 22, 1929; Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1925.*

[37]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1928* and *1929; MORNING HERALD,* April 22, 1929; Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, undated newspaper clipping from scrapbook.

[38]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1930*; Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, unidentified newspaper clippings dated June 5, 1930 and August 3, 1930 contained in scrapbook.

[39]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1929.*

[40]Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, Chairman of the Durham Public Library Board of Trustees to Watts Hill, President of Watts Hospital, August 25, 1930; Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1930.*

[41]Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, unidentified newspaper clipping dated August 26, 1931 in scrapbook, and also undated memo of Crawford; Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1931.*

[42]*MORNING HERALD,* July 28, 1931; *DURHAM* (N.C.) *SUN,* August 3, 1931 and July 31, 1931.

[43]*DURHAM SUN,* July 28, 1931.

[44]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932,* and *1933;* "North Carolina Libraries and Librarians — Durham," *NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY BULLETIN* 6 (March 1927): 232.

[45]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1935*; Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, unidentified newspaper clipping, dated September 6, 1935 in scrapbook.

[46]*DURHAM SUN,* August 6, 1936; Durham Public Library, Miscellaneous Files, unidentified newspaper clipping dated August 6, 1936 in scrapbook; Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1936, 1937,* and *1940.*

[48]Durham Public Library, *Annual Report, 1940.*

[48]*Ibid., 1933, 1937,* and *1940.*