



*This view of the Davie County Public Library in Mocksville shows the circulation desk (left center), local history room (center background), front entrance (right background), and card catalog (right center).*

## A NEW LIBRARY FOR DAVIE COUNTY

by

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Cooperative effort is reflected in the growth of the Davie County Public Library. In continuous operation since 1943, the library began in a rented room containing 150 square feet of floor space. Income was a local appropriation of \$400 and a State Aid grant of \$1,484. In 1945 it moved into two rooms in the basement of the Courthouse. In 1955, the library proudly moved into the Davie County Office Building, where ground floor quarters were designed for library use and planned to accommodate 10,000 volumes. The budget that year included \$2,622 in local appropriations and \$3,786 in State Aid. By 1960 the hubbub of activity in this 1,665 square feet of space with 16,000 volumes, three staff members, and several volunteer workers was maddening. The library trustees, staff, and the county commissioners soon realized that the rapidly expanding program which the library sponsored required more space. The Library Services and Construction Act (1964) funds provided the stimulus for action. With the promise of this assistance, library trustees and county commissioners agreed that a new building was finally attainable.

In June, 1963 the visits of the librarian to other new buildings and the notes she made of space requirements and relationships were organized into the first draft of a building program. By the time the third revised program had been written, the trustees asked the librarian to interview representatives of various architectural firms and to present for the board's approval the firm she found most sympathetic with the problem.

1. Mrs. Blackwelder, director of the Davie County Public Library until December, 1966, is now a reference librarian at the Public Library of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County.

of providing maximum space for the library's expanding program at minimum cost.

Finances now became a primary consideration. The library building fund consisted of \$200 contributed by patrons in lieu of memorial books. The general consensus of community leaders was that a library bond issue would not pass. With no wealthy benefactor on the scene, the only alternative was a local fund raising drive.

The confidence of the library board, staff, and interested citizens that Davie County residents would respond was based on their knowledge of the community and the esteem in which the library was held by the people of the county. This fact was evidenced by the substantial increases in the library budget which raised total local appropriations no less than 400 percent between 1960 and 1965.

The enthusiasm about the proposed library building was contagious. This enthusiasm encouraged the county commissioners to purchase a building site of adequate size for both building and parking space. It persuaded Charles Morrison Grier and Associates of Charlotte to take a chance on the fund-raising ability of Davie County citizens and to prepare preliminary drawings which interpreted the building program in elevations, floor plans and areas that the public could understand. This firm proved most helpful, cooperative, and attentive to every desired detail in the building program.

The library building team, armed with the preliminary drawings, was then able to enlist the assistance of the man they had identified as best qualified to serve as fund-raising chairman — a local banker.

A key worker was named for each of the 43 communities or sections of the county and the solicitation began in December, 1964.

In March, 1965 the fund-raising chairman announced that the library drive had reached its goal. A total of \$92,879.10 was contributed, representing 1,953 contributions. Citizens did not ask, "When will the new library be open?" but, "When will *our* library be finished?"

February 21, 1966 was a signal day — the Davie County Public Library opened her doors. The 10,000 square foot building with its 20,000 volumes is providing Davie County citizens with many new services. During the first eleven months since moving, there have been 106 library-sponsored programs and meetings in the 100-chair capacity multi-purpose room with an audience totaling 2,915. The four art exhibits (North Carolina Museum of Art, Associated Artists of North Carolina, and two private collections) have been a distinct contribution to the cultural life of the county.

The library is now open one night a week. Instead of two reading tables, there are adequate tables and chairs for 91 and beautifully upholstered occasional furniture for 12 persons. An attractive local history room, where Davie County memorabilia is acquired and filed by a volunteer worker, has enticed many citizens into the library and continues to be a center of interest for visitors. Other new facilities and services provided include adequate shelving for 40,000 volumes, more reading space, a 16 mm. projector and a film-strip projector, storage for back issues of periodicals accessible to the staff, and adequate office and workroom space. A paved parking lot provides space for 52 cars, and the grounds have been landscaped and planted in a most attractive way. The two sculptures in the open court yard in front of the library were carved by Ogden Deal from Balfour pink granite. They are simple yet sensitive depictions of the artist's three children.

So far the only error found in the building plan is that the utility storage room is not adequate in size for the needs of the library. Even now it barely houses the extra folding chairs and tables.

Future expansion was provided by enclosing the multi-purpose room, the history

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room, and the librarian's office with non-load-bearing walls which can be removed. The children's area, presently set off by book stacks, can provide expansion for adult stack area when necessary.

The citizens of Davie County are justly proud of the seeming miracle which they have accomplished and seize the opportunity to schedule programs at the library and to show it to friends and visitors. Our county officials and representative persons and groups take justifiable pride in the compliments they receive at meetings throughout the state.