

GLEANINGS FROM YESTERYEAR

NOTE: The following excerpts were gleaned from back issues of *North Carolina Libraries*. The author's name appears at the end of each excerpt. Similar excerpts will appear in future issues as space permits.

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"Library privileges, a matter of course increasing among a large segment of the public, are still too rare and precious in our State. An aging colored washwoman with negligible education and a hunger to read comes to me periodically to borrow a book. She has my latest Willa Cather now. I don't know where to tell Aunt Lucy to go for her books.

Book lovers and those to whom reading as they will is an important item in the pursuit of happiness are vigilant and alert these days to the pricelessness of the reading privilege, now that it is being threatened by forces that would regiment life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And this impulse may be the leavening that will help to extend happiness in respect to reading to those who have not yet even the tools of pursuit and to those who with the tools have not the means."

—Bernice K. Harris
Vol. 1, No. 4
(Sept., 1942)

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"We have failed to secure from the North Carolina legislature a material increase in state aid for public libraries . . .

Too many legislators were without positive conviction that public libraries have an important place in democratic society and the State's welfare. During the session, public libraries were pictured as a light, recreational agenda to the educational facilities of the State. Some legislators consider libraries as institutions filled with trash unfit to read. Another large group, which did not actively oppose an improvement of public library facilities in North Carolina, lacked the vision to support actively the library program. Their passivity amounted to a support of the opposition.

Contrasted with the lack of success in library legislation the schools and the agriculture group accomplished their aims in securing enactment of practically every point outlined in their programs. Their lobbies in Raleigh were powerful. They had thousands of friends on the home front to besiege the legislators with the demands of the school and agricultural groups. In fact, most legislators were committed to the support of school and agricultural programs before they were elected."

—Hoyt R. Galvin
Vol. 2, No. 2
(March, 1943)

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"We extend to various Army and Navy units on the campus every service that we do to the civilian students. All departments of the Library are open to them and their use varies according to the class assignments of each group. Special rooms in the Library for study use are being assigned at specific hours for certain service units. The War Information Center, with its attractive facilities in the main lobby of the Library, collects late helpful materials for the use of the armed forces, as well as for the general reading public. The opportunities for browsing, resting, or purchasing books in the Bull's Head Bookshop, on

the ground floor of the Library, are being increasingly taken advantage of by men of the Army and Navy stationed in Chapel Hill."

—Charles E. Rush
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The very preservation of western civilization depends on how well and widely we read. No one is born civilized; he attains that state if he can. Hitler came near dissolving our civilization in a solution of blood because so many supposedly educated people were unable to distinguish between evil incarnate and 'the wave of the future.' How close it came to extinction may be measured by the difference between the minds of Chamberlain and Churchill. Chamberlain did not believe in Hitler any more than we believe in a personal devil; Churchill recognized Hitler for what he was because reading had familiarized him with Hitler's prototypes — Iago and the villain of the Book of Genesis."

—William T. Polk
Vol. 4, No. 2
(May, 1945)

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"Good library service requires that the people shall have access to whatever books they will use. 7,000 new titles are published annually; about 1/2 are suitable for public library use. Experience has shown that an ample book stock can be maintained if purchases are made at the rate of 1/5 volume per capita. North Carolina public and county libraries purchased books at the rate of 1/20 volume per capita.

Less than 1/2 the Negro population has access to public libraries. Separate service of books, librarians, budget, housing, and public relations with bookmobile to cover the rural sections should be part of the county library system. 37 of the 100 counties have Negro public libraries. 40 other counties which are more than 10% Negro have no public libraries. 12 bookmobiles serve the Negroes."

—Marjorie Beal
Vol. 7, No. 1
(March, 1948)

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"My philosophy of librarianship stresses service. I believe strongly that if our function of custodianship begins to take precedence over our function of service, something is drastically wrong and corrective measures need to be taken.

In emphasizing the service function, it can mean, though not necessarily, losses of material — sometimes material that is difficult to replace. It can result, and frequently does, in extra work for the circulation staff. It can also mean, unfortunately, that service to unco-operative individuals may result in poor service to others. To counter-balance these elements, however, there can be achieved a friendship for the library which is priceless.

I believe that many things can be done for library patrons, and done cheerfully, that are definitely impositions on the library staff. I also believe that we can say no gracefully when an imposition is too gross."

—Harlan C. Brown
Vol. 8, No. 2
(June, 1949)