

"The Library Board had thought of every possible solution to the problem of space and building. Best friends advised against going to the people with a bond vote. Public school needs were many, the court house was bulging, and our county commissioners were striving to cope with the problem of meeting the cost.

"And then this scholarly friend, a retired book publisher, said he knew of no county anywhere that needed a library more and he knew of none that would appreciate it as much, so he offered to pay on a matching basis up to \$75,000.00 of the cost of a new library building.

"The dark clouds began to turn to silver. It was this challenge, this inspiration, that set up and set off the undertaking that you see here today in its completed form.

"I can't say too much about, and for, Dr. Richard H. Thornton and his wife Nina. They have given and they continue to give to the public library of Granville County."

Dr. Thornton responded with a short speech from which excerpts are here included.

A Dream Come True

RICHARD H. THORNTON

It was just thirty years ago that the library department of the Oxford's Woman's Club, working under the direction of the North Carolina Library Commission, inaugurated a movement for public library service in Granville County. Two years later the people of the county voted a three cent tax on the hundred dollar evaluation, and thereby established the first county-wide, tax-supported library in the Southeastern States. This is a record to be proud of.

From these simple beginnings the Granville County Library was born. It has now developed into a community institution, efficiently serving the town and the county, with an excellent collection of something over 30,000 volumes, well catalogued and displayed. The usefulness of the library has been increased by its several branches in the county, and the travels of the bookmobile into less populated areas. The library has kept abreast of modern trends in providing records, films, and other accessories to study, and will now be able also to further interest in the fine arts.

The library has afforded a fine example of a community working together for instruction and enlightenment. It has become a center for many types of activities; several worthwhile study courses have been undertaken, and in this new building such facilities for instruction can be greatly expanded. The library can now provide a public forum for the discussion of important questions, and a gathering place for various cultural groups. It can be a center for the discussion of civic problems and be an aid to business groups. It can bring together both the young and the old for meetings of many kinds.

The Board of County Commissioners deserves special praise for the fine way in which it has supported the library, and ministered to its financial needs. Without their enthusiastic backing the library would never have attained its present standing. I am sure they will be equally interested in its future growth, and provide means for deriving maximum benefits from its operation

Until now this library had been housed in a very inadequate building. It had far outgrown its physical plant, and had been limited for lack of space in doing many things it might do, and wanted to do, but had no means. Two years ago this spring, some of us who made extensive use of the library and appreciated what the librarians were trying to do under severe handicaps, came to feel that it was time to do something about the situation, and work toward plans for a new library building, one adequate to future as well as to present needs, and worthy of the city of Oxford, and Granville County, which it was trying to serve.

Representatives of both the city of Oxford and the County of Granville came together to confer on plans and procedures. From the beginning there was an enthusiastic response, and steps were soon taken for a fund-raising campaign that would reach every one in the county, both young and old. In fact, it was the very early encouragement and support from school children that gave us courage to proceed with all possible speed. We had visions of a new library that would attract every citizen of the county, young and old, to come in to read, to study, and perhaps to meditate.

It would be impossible here to list the great number of individuals who help to bring the project to fruition. If any one person should be singled out for praise, it would be Tom Johnson, chairman of the Library board. From the first he kept the idea of the library before the public and worked endless hours on special matters that needed attention. "Moo" Yancey was unusually effective in getting contributions from important citizens, and Kennon Taylor played an important role in getting help from citizens of the county and of Oxford.

My own part in making the library possible has been a very simple one, but my contribution has brought me very great satisfaction, and a feeling that I am helping to provide facilities for the training of future citizens of the county, as well as recreation and enjoyment for the older members of the community. It is my hope that the library will attract many new readers, and become a center for the cultural life of the people to whom it belongs.

No word of mine can give adequate praise to the work of Edith Cannady and Sophronia Cooper, and their library staff, in assisting and furthering all our efforts to make the dream of a new library come true. I hope the pleasantness of their new surroundings will be some compensation for the many hours of devoted work they have contributed over the years in making the library the success it now is.

It is my hope that this new building will be a mecca for all groups and individuals who wish to take advantage of the opportunities offered them. The building is ample to take care of our library growth for many years to come, but growth will come more rapidly than we think. In this building we have something in which we can take pride—it has already attracted the attention of many visitors passing through Oxford. The town can have no finer advertisement.