

## A MOTTO IN ACTION

### East Carolina College — "TO SERVE"

"Please send me all the books you have on Education," was a request made of a teachers college library by a high school student.

"I have been appointed teacher-librarian of our school, but I have never studied library science. Please write me a letter, telling me what to do," wrote a teacher to the Librarian of East Carolina College.

Such requests would seem to indicate that the time when the college served as an ivory tower for scholarly recluses, if there ever were such a period, has passed. Colleges, especially those preparing students to become teachers, are concerned with what is going on in the world, and faculty members and students are participating in community affairs. The library in such institutions is not the secluded, topmost room in the mythical ivory tower; and the librarian, like others of the faculty, is interested in community needs.

East Carolina College is ambitious to make its motto, "To serve," felt over as wide an area as possible; especially is the College eager to serve eastern North Carolina. In its program of training school librarians the Library feels a close relationship with the public school libraries of the area.

Many of these schools are small and have a staff which does not include a librarian; even the teacher-librarians have less than half time to devote to library work. In fact some teachers, who have been asked to serve as librarians, have as heavy a teaching load as any other teacher in the school, and time given to the library is entirely extra-curricular. A number of these teacher-librarians have never had even one course preparing them for the work. To the library science faculty at East Carolina this seems to be a field demanding their service; therefore they have offered to go to the schools and help organize the libraries or to help improve those already organized.

The schools themselves have called attention to their difficulties in this field, for they have asked the Librarian to provide members of his staff to help with workshops. Some schools asked for a lecturer or a discussion leader for one meeting. Others wanted more service.

For example, in two successive years one member of the department participated in a workshop of county teachers where she acted as consultant for the group interested in the school library. In the first of these the group wanted to get a general picture of all the work of the school librarian; the other stressed principles and materials of book selection. Each of these groups met at night for two hours a week for six weeks. One of the results of these two workshops was requests for further help from the librarians of East Carolina College.

In that county two schools asked that some one come to help organize their libraries. In one elementary school a teacher-librarian had been appointed and the teachers had been asked to help organize the library. The instructor from the college was asked to direct the work. A substitute was hired to teach the grade of the teacher-librarian for three days. The assistant from the College spent a large part of the time classifying the entire collection with the help of the librarian whom she taught to find classification numbers in available catalogs and bibliographies. After school hours each day a committee of teachers came and accessioned books. At a faculty meeting the college teacher explained what other steps should be taken to prepare the books for circulation and to make shelf list cards so that the work of organizing might be completed.

In the other school of the same county, which asked for similar help, a teacher-librarian and a library committee had been appointed. Five teachers accepted the responsibility of organizing the library as their special project. The procedure was much the same as at the first school except that less time was given to it by the representative

from the College because part of the book collection had been classified and because the smaller group of workers was able to proceed faster. Here, as is often the case, discarding of worn out and unsuitable material was an important part of the preparation of the library for use.

To be able to serve the school libraries the librarians of the College have needed to know the library situation in the schools; so whenever possible they have visited school libraries in this section of the State. Sometimes these visits have been in the nature of follow-up work; the teachers of library science have visited the schools in which were librarians who had studied at East Carolina College. At other times the visits have been made at the invitation of the principal or the librarian of the school. Always the purpose is to learn what is needed and to give as much help as possible.

Personal contacts are not always possible; so the Library tries to extend aid through the mail and the parcel post. Teachers and pupils write for bibliographies so that needed books may be added to the collection of the school library. They request copies of the long list of sources of audio-visual aids compiled by a member of this faculty. At times they request packages of books which are not available in their local collections. Fortunately the subjects are not generally so broad and inclusive as that of the request quoted at the beginning of this article.

Letters asking that the writer be taught school librarianship in one easy lesson are answered as sincerely as they are written. Such an answer lists the essential book tools for school library service, outlines the initial steps of organization, refers the person to the State School Library Adviser, and offers the help of some one from the Department of Library Science of the College if the school is not too distant. The one who answered the letter of the teacher quoted above often wondered whether the answer was satisfactory or whether the teacher-librarian was as overwhelmed as the instructor who received the request.

A young man, who had served as student assistant at the circulation desk of the College Library, was pressed into service as school librarian. He wrote, "I have been asked to serve as school librarian. We have a new school building, including a library and a work room, and there is a collection of about six hundred books. I cannot find an accession book, a shelf list, or a card catalog. I want to ask you just one question: What shall I do?" Though his note was humorous throughout, he seriously wanted help. The reply was much the same as has been previously indicated; he followed it up with further correspondence and with a visit. He has a full schedule of classes in English and French, he coaches dramatics, and he is adviser to the staff of the school annual. Even with all the help he can get and with his sense of humor and very real ability, he probably has not been able to give the library service that he would like to render; but the teacher who tried to help him feels sure that he will make some real progress in library service to that school.

These are only a few examples of the kind of field service that is being done. It is such young people and such school libraries that the faculty of the Department of Library Science of East Carolina College wants to help.

—Elizabeth S. Walker, Assistant Librarian,  
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Greenville, N. C.

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Davidson College Library has been given a collection of unique material pertaining to North Carolina's mysterious Peter Stuart Ney, by the family of the late Dr. James Edward Smoot of Concord, author of "Marshal Ney—Before and After Execution," published in 1929.

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Durham Public Library reopened on January 17th after extensive repairs.