

THE COLLEGE LIBRARY IN NORTH CAROLINA, 1904-1954

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College libraries played an important part in the first meeting of the North Carolina Library Association in Charlotte fifty years ago. The theme of that meeting as expressed by the first president, Mrs. Annie Smith Ross, was cooperation among the libraries of North Carolina—public, school and college. The interesting thing was, not that college librarians were present and taking part in these meetings, but that they brought along members of their faculty. President J. C. Kilgo of Trinity College in Durham (later to become Duke University) made a major address the first day. His theme was, in part, that it would take dollars not just pennies to build great libraries for our state. Mr. J. P. Breedlove, a member of the Executive Committee, was Librarian at Trinity. Miss Annie Petty, Librarian at the State Normal and Industrial College (now the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina) and also a member of the Executive Committee, had her president, Charles D. McIver, scheduled for the program. A family illness prevented his attendance. Dr. McIver's theme since the founding of the college at Greensboro a decade or so earlier had been that "no institution without a good library can reasonably hope to send into the world graduates with a literary spirit," and he supported strong library programs not only at the College but for the whole of North Carolina. Louis R. Wilson, Librarian at the University of North Carolina, was the first Secretary and Treasurer of the Association as well as a member of the Executive Committee. He jumped into the breach left by the absence of Dr. McIver and delivered the talk on rural libraries in North Carolina. Dr. Eben Alexander from the University presented an address on "The College Library." Dr. Alexander gave statistics on great libraries of the nation, and pointed out that North Carolina then was third in the Southern states with a total of 132,000 volumes in all the college collections in the state. "The crying need now," Dr. Alexander said, "is for buildings better adapted for use as houses of books."

In June 1907 Louis R. Wilson, in writing for the special Southern Number of *The World's Work*, edited by Walter Hines Page, said, "Southern college libraries have undergone a *complete revolution* in spirit." It should be remembered that Walter Hines Page in his famous address entitled "The Forgotten Man" in Greensboro ten years earlier said: "There are no great libraries in the State, nor do people yet read . . ." By 1907 there had been built at Trinity a new \$50,000 library. Carnegie had financed college buildings at Davidson, at Guilford, at State College, at the State Normal, and at the University. Most important in Mr. Wilson's mind was a matching endowment of \$55,000 at the University which had been established for purchase of books when the new building was completed. This gave the University an opportunity to begin a systematic program of acquisition which under Louis R. Wilson's direction was to bring so much leadership to the educational program at Chapel Hill.

The meeting of the American Library Association in Asheville in 1907 made leaders in the State well aware of librarianship as a profession. College librarians had received a shot in the arm somewhat earlier. Louis R. Wilson had worked three years in Haverford College Library and had spent a summer of intensive study of library literature before beginning his work at the University in 1901. Mr. Breedlove had attended a summer session at Amherst College studying library techniques and Miss Annie Petty was given

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a year to study librarianship at Drexel Institute in 1898-99. There was an alert and dedicated group of men and women ready to make a career of building libraries in North Carolina.

Mr. Wilson at Chapel Hill in the summer of 1904 taught the first courses in librarianship in the Southeast. Miss Petty in a less formal way was teaching students also each year and helping many others throughout the State coming back to her for advice. The position of librarian in the colleges had been established. It was no longer a job to be handed from year to year to some conscientious student or graduate assistant under faculty guidance. The college library had been integrated into the teaching program as a department with the need for full-time professional guidance and funds for building the book collections. Mr. Breedlove had increased his book collection from 11,000 volumes in 1899 to 37,000 volumes by 1907. By 1907 there were 45,000 volumes in the library at the University and an insured annual income for books of over \$3,000. The North Carolina Collection had been established and special collections relating to history, literature and conditions of the South were being built. Mr. Wilson was made an Associate Professor in 1907.

Statistics are not too plentiful for the first decade of the century. The Library Commission made its first report in 1909-10. The revolution in spirit had taken place in North Carolina college libraries. Book collections had grown rapidly and more and more perfectly equipped laboratories for their use had been built. The library had become important to the college as a whole. The librarian was no longer a mere curator of books, but a well-trained professional man.

The periods following each of the world wars saw many new developments in all the college libraries and an increased impetus in the development of the university libraries into research centers for the South and for the nation. From the more or less one-man libraries of the period before World War I, the college and university library staff was growing to major proportions in the community. The summary of library conditions in the Commission's Report of 1913-14 listed only eight trained librarians in all the college libraries in the state. Eighteen years later the library staff of the University at Chapel Hill alone had increased to thirty (twelve of which were listed as non-professional). The staff at a number of other college libraries had grown proportionately and the library system had become a complex department of the university.

In an article on "The Use of Books and Libraries in North Carolina" in the January issue of *The Journal of Social Forces*, 1922, Louis R. Wilson showed despite many increases in North Carolina college libraries, they were falling far behind those of the nation in the support they were receiving. Referring to statistics appearing in *The North Carolina Library Bulletin*, he said, "Six of the institutions added less than 100 volumes during the year. The actual figures were 16 to 62. Five added between 101 and 200 volumes, nine between 201 and 500, four between 501 and 1,000, six between 1,001 and 2,000, one between 2,001 and 8,000, and one over 8,000. The grand total, including state library and supreme court, was only 25,479, a total less by 505 than the 25,984 added to the library of the University of California alone. The library of the University of Michigan came within 26 of the grand total, Yale doubled it, and Harvard with 73,100 volumes practically trebled it!"

Louis R. Wilson was not satisfied. He was thinking in terms of our libraries compared with others in the nation and continued his program for improving libraries in North Carolina. Many magnificent and imposing new buildings were being built for college libraries during the 1920's. With increased staff and rapidly growing book collections, new methods of book control were being sought. The Library of Congress Card Catalog at Chapel Hill was being expanded into a union catalog listing holdings of many major libraries of the country. The need for bibliographical control and cooperation in building research collections was in the air. The University had set up a Committee on

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Intellectual Cooperation early in 1930 and the Librarian, Robert B. Downs, was appointed a member. The cooperative program with Duke had its beginnings then and the first survey of research materials in North Carolina libraries was published in 1936.

The meetings of the Southeastern Library Association at Signal Mountain in 1926 had important results. Criteria for school libraries and standards for accreditation were formulated and later accepted by the Southern Association. It was the go ahead signal for establishment of library schools in the South. Mr. Stone established a library school at North Carolina College for Women in Greensboro. This school was later, with the consolidation of the University of North Carolina, transferred to Chapel Hill and combined with the school there to make a graduate program for all types of librarians. Teacher training colleges and their libraries were also strengthened throughout the state during this period.

The period since World War II seems too close upon us and knowledge of the college and university libraries too intimate to readers of *North Carolina Libraries* to need much comment. The State of North Carolina has been investing millions of dollars in library buildings on the campuses of its institutions as well as generously increased book budgets. This has been true also for the Negro Colleges. The Negro College librarians have built up their own collections and in recent years, as a result of leadership among the librarians in those colleges, there are well equipped libraries with growing book collections, especially in those colleges supported from State funds. Junior college libraries have also grown and collections are now larger than they were at Chapel Hill, Trinity or State College in 1904. A few total figures from the 1952-53 report of the North Carolina Library Commission speak for themselves of the growth of college libraries during the past fifty years:

FULL-TIME STAFF, 1952-53, FOR:

University and College Libraries	246
Junior College Libraries	26
Negro University and College Libraries	49
Total	321

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE FOR BOOKS AND PERIODICALS IN 1952-53:

University and College Libraries	\$413,962.00
Junior College Libraries	22,775.00
Negro University and College Libraries	84,249.00
Total	\$520,986.00

VOLUMES IN NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES FOR 1952-53:

University and College Libraries	2,766,222
Junior College Libraries	239,598
Negro University and College Libraries	344,166
Total	3,349,986

These figures compared to conditions in 1904 when Dr. Alexander spoke on the college library at the first meeting of the NCLA show the tremendous growth of college libraries during the past 50 years. In the revolution Dr. Wilson spoke of during the first decade of the century, the foundations for the modern college library in North Carolina were laid. We owe a debt of gratitude that they were laid with such soundness and vision.

Additional copies of this 50th Anniversary issue will be available. Orders at twenty-five cents per copy should be sent to NCLA treasurer, Miss Marianna Long, Law Librarian, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.