

LIBRARY

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What is a Librarian?

First a Librarian must know what the Library is for: whom it is to serve; what those people may want to read, to see, to consult. This requires a knowledge of the community and its interest, its history, its activities, and its plans for the future.

The Librarian, whether man or woman, will meet the public and will try to secure for them the information and material they need. It may be entertaining stories for invalids, or it may be on historical, literary, or scientific and technical subjects, for school boys and girls, club women, workers of all sorts, professional or technical, or people who have some leisure and wish to read on current events, their hobbies, or what-not.

It is necessary for a Librarian no matter how small the library, to be familiar with a few good reference books, and be able to use them and guide the readers to them. These include dictionaries, encyclopedias, current almanacs and year books, biographical, scientific, historical and literary works.

Some training or experience in Library work is necessary for any librarian in charge of a library. This may have been simply a short course, or lectures at the university or normal school, or a full course.

A knowledge of the periodicals which are available to the Library is necessary. The current ones are the living matter, and often answer questions on subjects which have not yet reached book form. They are precious for the Library users. Guides to periodicals are available. "The Canadian Index" should be familiar to every Canadian Librarian. Reading of a daily paper is necessary.

A knowledge of new books and other publications should be acquired by the Librarian, and he or she should know how to get for the Library many of the valuable free books and pamphlets issued by the Government, Dominion or Provincial, or business houses, large and small. Posters are sometimes easy to get by asking for them.

Lists of new books should be on the bulletin board, and new books and periodicals should be where they can be seen by Library visitors.

A Librarian's own literature should be familiar to him: one or more periodicals, such as "The Canadian Library Association Bulletin", and the "Ontario Library Review" are not expensive, and are most useful.

A Librarian needs to be a "good housekeeper" to keep the Library neat and attractive; also to keep accurate and systematic records of the work done in the Library; borrowers; material lent and returned; all new material received; important questions asked, or suggestions made by users or visitors. Books must be prepared for use: listed, labelled, catalogued, and properly shelved, before being lent.

To meet people, young and old, at any time of day, and to live for the community and be alert to its needs and interests is part of a Librarian's life.

(Written by Miss Grace Lewis for newspaper publication in
Yarmouth N.S.)

An Afternoon in Dominion Branch, Cape Breton Regional Library

by

Ruby E. Wallace, Librarian, Cape Breton Regional Library

The cold wind blew in from the sea and a leaden sky brought an early dusk to the Town of Dominion one afternoon in early December. On the main street a group of children had gathered around the steps of a small frame building but their ebullient after-school spirits defied the sinister sky and wind as they ran about and played their usual push-and-shove game of waiting. Those who could, worked their way up the steps to peer through the glass in the door into the small but gayly-colored room partially lined with book shelves and see their genial library custodian busily putting things in order on his desk and going to the aluminum-colored stove in the corner to feed it well so the room would feel as cozy as it appeared from the top-step vantage point. Those who could not get on the steps took quick glances up the road and as a car drew up the driver could hear, "Here she is. It's going to open now."

A sudden scramble from the crowd brought two boys to the car and as the car door opened the eager inquiry came, "Have you new books for us today? We'll carry them in for you." They spied the carton lightly reposing in its usual place on the back seat. "Thank you boys," came the librarian's reply, "You can easily get it out this time for it isn't very heavy." How she wished it were many times heavier, heavy enough for all the crowd to have a share in carrying it. The push-and-shove game relaxed while room was made for the librarian and the boys with the books to get through. Then it began with a new vigour with the word, "Yes, the Library will open very soon now."

The librarian and custodian had a few short minutes of consultation while unpacking the extremely light carton carried in by the boys. Ten picture books! One glance at the children's corner proved what was already known that not a book remained on the shelves. This would be the third day for the children of the Town of Dominion to have their own Branch of the Cape Breton Regional Library. Could it have been a dream that there were actually books on those shelves the first day?

The lock was snapped back and with the opening of the door every inch of space in the small room seemed to have been filled in the twinkling of an eye. Hands and arms seemed to be reaching out everywhere and in the excited chatter the librarians could hear, "I want a book too." "May I have a card?" "Aren't there any more books?" "Those bringing cards signed at home or wishing a card to take home, line up on the far side. Those returning books line up here." But the power of excitement was somewhat beyond the power of the librarians to form queues. All that could be done was to attempt to find enough space to stand and move one's arms sufficiently to register cards, quickly scanned for authentic signatures from home, or to stamp cards for returning books and ward off all the fingers anxious to pick up books in their pre-carded state.

That was when the game began, for what else could it be but a game. Somehow those few books had to be divided as fairly as possible. An attempt was made to carry the first few books to the shelves but although only a few steps from desk to shelf, the librarian was caught half way; just too many children wanted to stand on her feet. Not a move forward could be made. Like a basketball the books were passed to the outstretched hands of an older boy with a nod to put them on the table. The crowd groaned and scrambled for the table. But the game was much too rough and time had to be called. What game next? While frantically registering new members or carding books that had been returned, the idea of giving numbers like war-time meat-counter queues popped up. The children who had been waiting for some time and showed evidence of every intention of waiting the other hour until closing time if necessary, were numbered off, each to have his or her turn as a book would be returned. All eyes were glued on the door and a special welcome given if the one entering had

a book in hand. It looked like a partial solution but no sooner did the game begin than complications arose for invariably a picture book would come up for a twelve-year old or "Jane Eyre" for an eager five-year old boy. But it was a game and good-naturedly each would give up his turn at the word, "Oh, you wouldn't like this. How about letting number five or seven have this?" After all there was always another chance and besides it might even be possible to slip one of those other books past these librarians. Time and again books had been brought from the adult shelves and it had been no easy task to wean the children away from their discovered treasure. Of course to the young boy who pretended to be a toughie one could always say, "But that's a love story; you wouldn't want that," But what to do with "The Snake Pit" which appeared every few minutes in eager hands simply because the movie had been in town?

Fifteen minutes to closing time found numbers fifteen to thirty still waiting. Magazines were being well-thumbed whether they had anything of interest for the thumber or not. At last the librarians could pause long enough to look around and straighten their backs. The door opened once more. In came the gang. "It could only be the western gang," inwardly groaned the librarian. Up came the leader and the usual tone of assumed authority, "What do we have to do to get books from this place? We want books about the days the Indians and French and English fought in Canada." "Yep" came another voice, "That's what we want; none of these sissy books for us." With a relieved grin the librarian led the way to the dishevelled shelves to search for at least one book that would give these boys the adventure story they wanted. There was the offensive "Snake Pit" and there was "Dinner at Antione's" but not one to be found that would even mention tomahawks or red-coats. However, a promise to try to bring something next day and an explanation of how books might be borrowed for them from another branch library seemed to satisfy these youngsters who needed much more practice to be really tough. Fifteen minutes flew by and the gang moved off and so did numbers eighteen to thirty saying they would come early next day and maybe they could get a book then. The last to leave was unhappiest of all for she was just too young to understand why she couldn't take the little book that said on the cover, "Electric Welding".

The door closed and looking at the room which was a complete shambles, the librarian could only flop in a chair and weakly say to the custodian, "And you Cape Bretoners tell us you are not readers. Not readers and every branch library with empty shelves, the bookmobile having one book for every fourth child and from every quarter long lists of requests for everything from poetry to plumbing, from house building to history. Is this a dream or a nightmare?"

Maritime Library News

Charlottetown Public Library

Young Canada's Book Week in Charlottetown was a very interesting week, and while the boys and girls had an enjoyable time, it was shared in a larger measure by the parents and teachers, who were quite enthusiastic.

This year we had the co-operation of the leading stores, who displayed the Canadian Library Association poster and the book stores had a very attractive display of children's books. Local newspapers as usual gave us publicity stressing the importance of this week.

The boys and girls section of the main floor of the library featured a colorful display of many beautifully illustrated books, some of them written by Canadian authors or with a Canadian background. We included the classics and dressed them up in fresh jackets, and replaced a number of our worn out copies.

Special book lists, prepared by the C.L.A. were available for the parents and teachers, and we had appropriately decorated book marks for the children to take home with them. They do love something to keep.

Featured over the radio during the week was a talk on children's reading, also a play entitled: "Mother Library's Tea Party" - boys and girls of Grade 5 of the City Schools taking part, and spot announcements prepared by the Canadian Library Association. The local radio station C.F.C.Y. plays a major role in this celebration, as the radio reaches out to so many and gives the boys and girls living in the rural areas, as well as the parents and teachers an opportunity to join with us in this happy week.

On Saturday morning, through the courtesy of the National Film Board we had our usual children's films which had to be limited to Grades 1 and 2 on account of lack of space. As the hour for opening the library was approaching one could see the youngsters rushing from all directions, and when asked where they were going they said simply, but with a broad smile - "Why we are going to the library!" and in such a tone as to wonder why anyone would ask them such a question.

Letters were sent to all the schools, as usual, but this year the response was greater than previous years. We are always so pleased when the teachers bring their classes to the library. For in this way, the teachers, knowing their pupils, have a better chance of developing their reading tastes. We noted a decided increase in our juvenile circulation for the month of November, and we are hoping it continues. With the enthusiasm of the youngsters we are more convinced than ever of the urgent

need of a room for the boys and girls. We are greatly handicapped now, but in the meantime we must not let their enthusiasm waiver, but give them books, and more books!

Jean Gill.

Tignish Branch, Prince Edward Island Libraries

A new library building at Tignish was officially opened on Dec.15 by Dr. L.W.Shaw, Deputy Minister of Education. The key of the building was handed to Dr. Shaw by Mr. Claude Kinch, the chairman of the Tignish Library Committee. Dr. Shaw opened the door and installed Miss Margaret Conroy as librarian. The building was then inspected by the public. It is a single story cottage-type building, twenty-two feet by eighteen, with grey stone siding and red roof. The color scheme of the interior is light green, cream and terra-cotta.

The Tignish library has been one of the most active branches of the Prince Edward Island Libraries since it was established in 1933; further progress is anticipated for it in its attractive new quarters.

Juniper, N.B.

Book Week in Juniper was observed by the Library celebrating its first anniversary. The library is flourishing under the guidance of Miss Blanche Peterson, primary teacher, who also acts as librarian each school day after school closes when pupils of the various departments are privileged and encouraged to borrow good books, and on each Thursday evening when the library is open to the public until 9 o'clock.

Book week posters were prominently displayed during the week and about 100 books loaned in the 4-day period.

There are at present over 2,000 books in the library. Recently S.A.Billings, who is keenly interested in the success of the library, had new shelves added, and a new desk has also been provided.

Mrs. H. J. Flemming, who has been mainly instrumental in procuring the library, held a birthday party commemorating the first year of its existence. She provided the children of grades one, two and three (About 28) with ice-cream and a large birthday cake decorated with one candle. Also during the afternoon she told the children stories from the works of Charles G.D.Roberts and from Grimm's Fairy Stories.

(Hartland Observer)

Saint John

We have had a busy fall with the place humming most of the time. Book Week we celebrated with the usual radio talks, visits to Home and School Associations, and school visits to the library. For a while we wondered if we had been almost too popular, for the Juvenile Department had a booming month--they have about 3600 books in that collection and in November the circulation was over 4000--before that they had had a high of only 2800.

Starting January 12, the University of New Brunswick is going to have extension courses at the Vocational School here. We will have the books for the different courses which lead to degrees and include history, economics, psychology and education. Some of the books we have to buy and others the University Library will send us. As far as I know this is one of few attempts at formal adult education in the city and should provide a stimulus to more serious reading.

George-Ann Fleming.

Mt. Allison University Library

Miss Olga Bishop reports the initiation of record hours, both library sponsored (such things as "I can hear it now" and "The cocktail party") and English-department sponsored (Modern poets and Shakespeare). The library publishes a bulletin of monthly acquisitions which they are sending to other Maritime universities; it might also be of interest to others.

Halifax Memorial Library

Miss Mary Cameron, Librarian, reports the new building will be ready for occupancy at the end of March, barring any further delay. The Children's Library as operated by the Junior League will become a part of the new library building; there will be a Story Hour Room above the library, and a separate entrance for the children. Miss Kathleen Currie and Miss Ellen Rhude are working with the Junior League in their present quarters.

Appointments to the staff are: Miss Ellen Webster, as reference librarian, to take up her duties February 1st, and Miss Mary Falconer, circulation librarian, coming in the Spring; Miss Barbara Smith has been appointed assistant cataloguer.

Department of Education Halifax

The Vocational High School is getting under way with some classes in attendance. Miss Durling and Miss Castas are in charge of the library.

Mrs. Vernon has been to three new rural high schools, and installed libraries in each.

Halifax Library Club

The meetings this season are held at the various libraries, the first being at Nova Scotia Technical College Library - host Don Redmond, the next being at the Dental-Medical Library of Dalhousie on invitation of Miss Charlotte Allen. In the new year we are looking forward to visiting King's College, Miss Harris being librarian there.

N.S. Regional Libraries

Cape Breton opened in September with Miss Ruby Wallace being overwhelmed by interested citizens. Stan MacDougall is librarian for Glace Bay. The staff of Headquarters for Cape Breton is: Shirley Colter, Betty Morris, and Jim McEachern the driver of the bookmobile.

Colchester-East Hants was officially ^{opened} on November 22nd by the Hon. Mr. Henry Hicks. They are housed in bright and spacious new quarters. Its Children's Library will be as attractive to the adults as to the children. Mrs. Benson formerly with the University of New Brunswick Library is with Colchester.

Miss Margaret Maxwell has been appointed librarian for Pictou, starting January 15th.

Miss Ruth Cummings of Halifax and Toronto has joined the Halifax office at Cataloguer.

Miss Lilian Swim of the Truro Public Library and able assistant when the collection combined with the regional library will be married early in the New Year. Best wishes are extended.

Mr. Peter Grossman gave lectures at McGill and Toronto Library Schools. The enrollment at both schools is high and the number of those interested in the regional library system was very encouraging.

During Book Week, St. Patrick's Girls' High School staff under the direction of Sister Mary Inez arranged a display of the library resources as they are to be found in the Dewey system on the shelves. The class professors elaborated by making displays of their particular subject.

United States Book Exchange

The United States Book Exchange has voted to admit to full membership any libraries in Canada that wish to participate. This organization is a cooperative enterprise supported by the libraries which participate, founded to serve as a centre and clearing house for the exchange of publications between and among the libraries of the United States and other countries. Each member library receives a monthly list of publications from which they may draw to the amount of the exchange-credit they have established by sending in publications for exchange. They pay transportation on the material they send in and the publications they receive back, and they also pay a nominal handling fee on each publication received. This fee provides maintenance of the USBE. Items are supplied on a revolving priority basis so that each participating library has an equitable opportunity to receive all the items it wants. A special request system allows the ordering of items which have not appeared on regular lists.

If this organization interests you , you should write for further information to:

United States Book Exchange
Library of Congress Building
Washington 25, D.C.
