

LIBRARY

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SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY  
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The Canadian Library Association's third-annual Conference will be held in the Chateau Laurier, Ottawa, June 4-10, 1948. General meetings will discuss "National Library Service", hear reports on Association activities and a panel discussion- "Author, Librarian Publisher". There will be meetings also of groups interested in Children's libraries, Reference work, Cataloging, College Libraries, Films etc.

The Maritime Library Association will hold a Conference in Fredericton, New Brunswick, June 15 and 16, 1948.

The Conference will open at 9.30 A. M., in the library of the University of New Brunswick. There will be discussions on general library problems in the Maritime Provinces, and members are urged to bring up their specific problems.

Miss Elizabeth H. Morton, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Library Association will attend the Conference. Dr. W. C. Desmond Pacey, Head of the Department of English Literature, University of New Brunswick, will address the Conference Tuesday evening.

Hotel accommodations are available at the new Lord Beaverbrook Hotel in Fredericton.

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Public Archives of Nova Scotia  
HALIFAX, N. S.

CHILDREN'S READING

by

Frances (Tilley) Lothian

From one corner of a small children's library is heard, "If you want a really good book, Johnny, take this one". The book so wholeheartedly recommended by a thirteen-year-old boy proves to be Parkman's Oregon Trail, unabridged, one of his favorites. It would be hard to know to what influence to credit this child's superior choice in his reading. Certainly his home could provide him with few enough books of any description and the influence of his particular school, in this respect, is doubtful. Reading was a means of participating vicariously in many adventures and normal boys' activities, possible for many youngsters but not for him. His reading tastes were of what librarians consider a high and interesting quality.

Most children at one stage or another want to read, and would read, if books were available to them. The amount of reading they do, and the type of books they choose to read depend entirely on the access they have to books from which they can select according to individual reading capabilities and experience. It is well known that a child, to whom all types of reading are available, may select anything from poorly written second-grade material to the old classic standbys, and appear to enjoy each with equal relish. But he instinctively knows what, for him, is good literature and he returns to that over and over again. The fact that we know that a child delights in hearing over and over, what, to him, is good literature ought to guide us in our selection for his reading, so that we can encourage his taste for good books before it becomes vitiated. The aim of any book collection is to have a representative selection of first rate books to fulfil his reading needs, and these will permanently influence his reading tastes.

An interesting comparison has been made between a small child, in his mental growth and development, and a blade of grass which grows rapidly on a well-kept lawn, enthusiastically reaching toward the light, sunshine and fresh air, all so vitally necessary for its health and well-being. The life of the blade of grass, so vigorously and hopefully begun, is interrupted by the lawn mower and after repeated set-backs by the machine, the grass loses its vitality and interest in development. It remains a stunted, withered, not-so-green blade of grass. So the child inquisitively seeks for answers to his questions and information necessary for his mental growth and development, but so frequently to little or no avail, until, after repeated rebuffs, he becomes discouraged and settles into a stunted pattern lacking originality or healthy normal growth.

Books of all types to answer all the reading requirements of growing children are essential to their well-rounded development. Generally speaking, the interests at different ages follow a similar pattern that can pretty well be relied upon in supplying books for children as they progress from one stage to another, according to their reading abilities, their own interests and personalities. Assuming that children's books are available to the boys and girls in a community through the services of a free public library (which certainly should be the case in all communities throughout the country) I propose to suggest briefly some simple ways of introducing suitable reading material to children and encouraging them in their reading.

The first requirement in effectively influencing the reading habits of children is an attractive, well selected collection of books of good standard quality from which they may freely choose what they wish to read. The books need to be sturdy, well printed and nicely illustrated. The collection needs to be attractively arranged and presented, and the room in which it is, no matter what the size or location, can be inexpensively but effectively decorated so as to create an interesting restful atmosphere inviting to all who use the library. Bright posters suggesting selected topics or types of books add to the appearance of the room and may directly influence the children in the choice of books to read. In this connection too, colorful book jackets have many practical uses.

Clubs organized in the library are an excellent means of creating interest in certain hobbies and the books or magazines connected with those particular hobbies, as well as in the library itself. Stamp collectors, naturalists, poetry lovers, young scientists, would-be-actors-all need encouragement and means of expression in their particular interests. Impromptu dramatization in the library of favorite stories or chapters of popular books is a good means of creating interest in books and in bringing children to the library. Reading lists are useful in suggesting books for readers and may be simply but attractively printed on colored papers. As summer reading projects, especially with small groups, reading games or contests are sometimes possible.

However, the most common and valuable means of creating interest in a library and in books in general is by well planned story-hours that include suitable stories and book-talks given by one interested in the children's stories and books as well as in the children to whom they are presented. In the library or in the classroom these are very effective, and as a regular feature, with the stories being told by one person who has the knack of telling stories well and is present each story-telling period, the story-hour becomes popular with boys and girls.

A book-talk, wherever given, needs to be brief, and, like a story to be told, it needs to be well prepared. It may consist of a brief resume of the book, or, perhaps better, may be a short introduction to it, supplemented with some exciting episode read from the book, in itself an invitation to the young reader to the library where that particular book may be borrowed and completed, and where other titles will supply what they want in adventure stories, tales about children of other lands, true lives of people, fairy tales and hero legends, modern science and hobby books and many others.

Visits of school grades to the library with their teachers are desirable because in this way the children are introduced to the library and the library to the children. Many who may not have known or have forgotten about its existence are thus encouraged to make use of the library, so that this practice is to be highly recommended.

In addition to a thorough knowledge of the books and the readers, and a pleasant personality, imagination is required on the part of the librarian. Children may have the correct name of the book they want, or may ask for it under almost any name but the right one. An excited little boy once rushed breathlessly up to the library desk and with wide expectant eyes asked for "the book that Andy got." This was in the New York Public Library and in the book Andy and the Ekon the book Andy had borrowed from the library was one about lions. To interpret this anxious youngster's request took a bit of imagination and quick thinking.

In these and other ways what, perhaps, was not done for us we can do for our children. We can start and keep them in the right road of good literature. Good literary taste once firmly set is not likely to yield easily to the fascination of trash.

ILLUSTRATORS OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS, 1744-1945, compiled by Bertha Mahony, Louise P. Latimer, Beulah Folmsbee. Boston, The Horn Book, Inc., 1947. \$15.00

A book review by Dorothy M.E. McKay

This is a book of distinction and value which we were happy to find included in the collection of the Nova Scotia Regional Libraries Commission, Halifax. Possibly other Maritime libraries are equally fortunate in owning it, but if not, it is hoped that each province will consider at least one copy a necessity. In itself it is a fine example of the book-maker's art in format, typography and arrangement and its appearance last fall was really an event in the book world,

Authorities in the field have written on the history and development of illustrated children's books from 1744 when John Newbery, the father of children's books published A Little Pretty Pocket-Book, to 1945.

Part I consists of ten chapters each dealing with some phase in the history of the development of children's book illustration. Anne Eaton, juvenile editor of the N. Y. Times Book Section, in one of these chapters writes on Illustrated Books for Children Before 1800 and illustrates her text with cuts which show the development of early illustrated books from Caxton and the Bewicks to William Blake. Jacqueline Overton in Illustrators of the Nineteenth Century in England presents an evaluation of artists who worked in black and white-Cruikshank, Doyle, and Hughes- and the trio associated with Edmund Evans, who worked in color-Crane, Caldecott, and Greenaway.

Helen Gentry, known for her fine book designing, writes on Graphic Processes in Children's Books. May Masseur, juvenile editor of the Viking Press, presents interesting comments on Developments of the Twentieth Century. There are other valuable contributions in this part of the book on early American illustration, Howard Pyle, foreign picture books, illustrators of children's classics, animated drawing, and the book artist; yesterday and tomorrow.

Part II contains brief biographies of living illustrators. Part III consists of bibliographies of illustrators and authors. This section provides a basis for extensive reading on the work of illustrators in the history of children's books and goes back beyond the two centuries to the earliest children's book for which the illustrator can be identified.

This is a book not only for the children's room in libraries that can afford it, but it is an extremely important reference book and a record of some of the best work of two centuries of illustrators. It shows that art in children's books is not an isolated field but is a part of all art, and it is an invaluable aid to a better understanding of all that is involved in fine bookmaking.

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The PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND LIBRARIES report:

" Last year nearly 300 country schools sent for the small box libraries that are packed and expressed from Headquarters. Over forty thousand volumes were read by rural school children. Reading among school children last year just skyrocketed; our reading increase over 1946 was 22,607, and of that 14,000 showed in the children's reading. The rise in children's reading is probably due to the fact that junior circulation was given a separate department under a teacher-librarian. New books helped too; circulation seems to be proportionate to the number of new books.

Twenty-four Island communities have miniature libraries, and there are several small deposit stations in which Prince Edward Islanders can have the same books as the borrowers at the New York Public Library. They realize how fortunate they are when they see how surprised many summer visitors are to find such a varied selection of the best and newest books in what they think of as a rather isolated spot.

The CHARLOTTETOWN LIBRARY has 3,366 registered borrowers. From the shelves during the past year they have borrowed nearly fifty thousand books of fiction, non-fiction, technical books, arts and crafts and children's books. Reading in Charlottetown has taken a practical turn: The Study of History by Toynbee or a book on sheet metal work are just as popular as Kingsblood Royal or The Tin Flute. The reading public has found that their education need not stop if they find they can't go on to University or training school; if a person understands what he reads he can be his own instructor with the help of the Public Library.

The library staff is hoping for a separate library in the basement for young readers. If they could be given individual attention, and have someone to show them the best books and talk about them, the juvenile circulation would undoubtedly increase amazingly.

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YARMOUTH Miss Isabel MacDonald writes of their children's library.

Since moving to this building we have a children's room furnished with low shelves and a table and chairs. We do not have staff enough to carry out a very extensive program with children, but we have 466 junior borrowers, and as we are on the route to one of the schools and the High School, the hours between 3.30 and 4.30 p.m. are very busy. The Children come to read, change books, find material for projects, book reviews and debates. Some do their writing here; others take the material home.

Through the I. O. D. E. (Markland Chapter) as a memorial to one of their members, we received the sum of \$130 to be spent for children's books. We set aside one small bookcase and to date we have 75 books. \$25 worth of boys' books have been ordered to add to it. From time to time more money is given for this shelf, which we call The Mildred Baker Memorial. Our small table is stacked with story books and magazines for those who come just to read. One very cold afternoon there were thirty-eight children here all at the same time. Chairs gave out, but the library was comfortable and warm so they sat on the floor. It was amusing to see them, and there was remarkably little noise considering the crowd.

THE PEOPLE'S LIBRARY, RESERVE MINES

The People's Library dates from 1935. Started on a shoestring, as Dr. Thompson says, it has grown steadily. Since it's establishment children have always been accommodated though the space and provision for young readers left much to be desired. To meet the ever increasing membership of juvenile readers, a branch library was opened in one of the schools about three years ago. Instead of merely accommodating the overflow of children who used the library to borrow books for home reading, it turned out that the children's library became incorporated officially into the school program.

Regular library sessions are now conducted daily, with every class in the school participating at least once a week-not only that, but the public school at the other end of the district made the request to have its pupils share in the same privileges. Our school library, then, with its trained librarian and fully organized library program, has developed a service new in Nova Scotia and become a sort of model for others in this field. (Adapted from a magazine article by Sister Frances Dolores, Librarian)

#### MONCTON

Damage estimated as high as \$60,000 was caused by a fire that swept through the Moncton Public Library on March 2, 1948, destroying thousands of valuable books and almost all library equipment. The fire was under control within three-quarters of an hour; water damage was particularly serious as it was necessary to soak the wooden building thoroughly to prevent further flare-ups of the fire. In commenting on the damage, Mr. Hubert Button, president of the library board, said that books that were not burned would still require replacement because of the damage from smoke and water. It would take \$50,000 to replace the 19,000 books valued at about \$2.50 each. Insurance on the books and other contents of the building was \$12,000. The building itself, a former residence owned by the Canadian National Railways, was insured for a small sum. The nucleus of a building fund exists in the form of a \$500 bond, the result of donations over a period of two years by the Friends of the Library Association.

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#### TALKS ON BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

Sister Francis Dolores gave two radio talks during the winter over CJFX-one on the subject of THE LIBRARY IN THE COMMUNITY, the other on THE LIBRARY IN THE SCHOOL. On March 11, she addressed Rotarians of Glace Bay at their weekly luncheon meeting on NOVA SCOTIA NEEDS LIBRARIANS.

Early in April the CBC International Service presented for listeners in England a short outline of what children in eastern Canada like to read. The talk was broadcast by Miss Dorothy Cullen.

CBC Talks for Women during the next few months include a weekly feature, "A BOOK I LIKE", presented on Mondays at 5.18 P.M.

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