

Bulletin  
of  
The Maritime Library Association

Vol. XL, No. 1

Fall, 1946

Editor: Dorothy Cullen  
C/O N.S. Regional Libraries Commission  
Halifax N. S.

---

EDITORIAL NOTES

Effective action in recruitment to librarianship has been taken by the Saskatchewan government in offering scholarships of \$600 each, tenable at McGill or Toronto Library Schools. This year the scholarships have been awarded to three former school teachers from the province.

Libraries obtained some welcome publicity in the popular weekly Saturday Evening Post, which contained in its July 13 issue, an article on the storyteller for the Boston Public Library, and in its July 20 issue, a story of how the Public Library of Fitchburg, Massachusetts brings home to its public, the resources and services of a progressive library.

Did you notice in the movie "Spellbound" how the hotel detective labelled Ingrid Bergman, as looking like a librarian or a teacher? Oh, that all librarians looked like Ingrid Bergman!

The Halifax Mail, commenting on the departure of Miss Marion Gilroy, says (in part); "The library situation here is nothing less than disgraceful... Provision has been made in the law for the development of libraries in this part of Canada, but it will take more than a statute to improve conditions. Both Miss Bateson and Miss Gilroy were enthusiastic and conscientious about turning the law into a serviceable reality. One has left, the other is leaving the provincial service. They will be difficult to replace but that should not prevent a determined effort by the province to do so. More than that the resignations should awaken the authorities to the shocking failure to do more than gesture about bringing the best in literature to a people who today have access to and use fewer books than those in almost any other part of Canada.

The M. L. A.: Memory Pictures

by

Mary Kinley Ingraham Hon. President M.L.A.

"Thoughts of a retired librarian, reminiscences of earlier days at Acadia Library, or anything that occurs to you." Such latitude the Editor gave the writer in a recent letter requesting a contribution. Thoughts of a retired librarian, if she keeps house, are crowded with ideas about cleaning, coal, the price of eggs --all of these sufficient to crowd into a corner reminiscences of a life in libraries, of association with books, new and old, and of the genial but select companionship of students, professors, librarians. Yet, when Memory holds the door from the past open a moment, the pictures that appear are less of the twenty-seven years of service in the Acadia Library, than of a public movement that had its beginnings there, namely, the birth and growth of the M. L. A.

The first picture shows a group of people gathered around the long table in the Reading Room of the Acadia Library on a day in February 1918. These were librarians and others who had assembled at the call of President Cutten to discuss the possibility of forming a Maritime Library Association. Memory holds the door impatiently, and I have no notes beside me, but I think the only librarians present who are living and active members today are Miss Vaughan of Saint John, Miss Starratt of Woodstock, and the writer of this article. The Association was organized, with Mr. E. J. Lay, founder of the Citizens' Library at Amherst, the first President. Enthusiasm and good will were by no means lacking, but there was little else to sustain the undertaking.

For some years afterwards we looked back to this meeting as the beginning of sorrows. President Lay died a few months later, and our little organisation was tossing like a ship without a captain on an uncharted sea. We came to anchor in the autumn of 1922 again at Acadia Library, where we reorganised. This second attempt was led off by inspiring addresses at a public meeting held in the Baptist Church that evening from the late Archdeacon Vroom, the late Superintendent of Education, Dr. A. H. MacKay, and the newly elected President Dr. W. C. Milner, who also has crossed the Great Divide. We drafted a Constitution of sorts, we arranged to meet regularly and to pay our fees. Because we needed those fees so terribly we welcomed to active membership almost any and every person who would join us. The result was chaos. Naturally, the aims became confused, and the struggling Library Association was used to promote the intellectual hobbies of one or two persons. We might as well use but "nihil de mortibus nisi bonum". The lack of single and intelligent aims made progress impossible.

Now comes another picture. Twelve years later 1934 there was another reorganisation, this time at Montreal where several librarians from the Maritimes were attending the M. L. A. Conference. Thirteen members were enrolled, with Mrs. John Stanfield the new President. Memory points out perhaps irrelevantly that while we discussed our plans there arose a violent thunderstorm, there was a crash of cars on the street outside, and as good as nothing there was a wedding in the church opposite our place of meeting.

Trouble awaited us on our return. Our chief officer, who had refused to be present, declared our proceedings illegal, --I believe "bogus" was the word used-- and for a time two Maritime Library Associations were announcing themselves in the newspapers. The one that survives today dates from "that female gathering at Montreal." However from that time we have made steady progress, save for a little halting during the worst of the war years.

This paper is already too long, but another picture Memory bids me show, the meeting of the M. L. A. in Mount Allison Library in 1936 when the body decided that it was able and ready to issue a monthly Bulletin. The mimeographed little paper has appeared regularly ever since, first under the editorship of the writer and since 1944 under that of Miss Dorothy Cullen.

Memory bids the presidents pass in stately procession: E. J. Day, W. C. Milner, Mrs. John Stanfield, Estelle M. E. Vaughan, H. B. Chandler, Winifred Snider, Marion Gilroy, Mrs. Marjorie Thompson. Another face, a charming one, looks in upon us, the keen, delicate face of Nora Batson, whose vigorous effort meant so much in our progress. And now other faces crowd, I cannot name them all, but we may not forget those who are no longer with us: Harry Piers, Eugenie Archibald, Mary Catherine MacDonald, Meredith White.

#### NEWS AND PERSONNELS

Miss Marion Gilroy, for the past year and a half, Secretary of the Nova Scotia Regional Libraries Commission, left recently to become Supervisor of Regional Libraries for the Province of Saskatchewan. Enroute she attended a meeting of the Canadian Library Council in Toronto. While we lament Miss Gilroy's departure, we wish her every success in her new work.

Miss Margaret Gill, Librarian of the National Research Council, Ottawa, is one of the Canadian delegation to the conference in Paris, this month of UNESCO. She will leave from Halifax November 10.

The marriage of Frances Louise, daughter of Rev. George W. Tilley and Mrs. Tilley of Harcourt, N. B. to Thomas MacKenzie Lothian, son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald L. Lothian, Kirkland Lake, Ont. took place in August at the bride's home. The bride formerly held positions in Mt. Allison Memorial Library and in the Saint John Free Public Library. The groom is a graduate of Queen's University and is Professor of Biology at Mt. Allison University.

Miss Ellen Webster, who was for three years with the Canadian Legion War Services Library, Halifax, is attending Dalhousie University in the last year of her Arts course. The new librarian at the Canadian Legion Library is Mrs. Eleanor Laughton, a graduate of the University of Toronto, who worked as an under-graduate in the library of Victoria College.

Mr. Will R. Bird of Amherst was the speaker at the October meeting of the Halifax Library Club. His topic was "Old Reading Societies in Nova Scotia." Mr. Bird outlined the activities of societies in various parts of the Province in the first quarter of the 19th century, telling how most of them quickly exhausted their reading resources and turned into debating, study and temperance clubs. He illustrated how his delving into old papers and letters gives him material for his stories by describing the diary of a sixteen year old girl on which was based the story "Release for 'Lizbeth'" in his new book "Sunrise for Peter".

A Library Handbook for students has been issued this year by Dalhousie Univ. It is a pocket-sized printed booklet of thirteen pages, which describes the different libraries of the University and in particular the MacDonald Memorial Library. It explains the use of the card catalogue and the procedure for getting books from the Reading Room or from the stacks for use in the library or at home. It mentions the Readers' Guide as the key to periodical material, and the Book Club where the best new books are available. At the last the library's rules for borrowing books are summarized.

Miss Dorothy Cullen has been granted leave-of-absence from the P. E. I. Libraries to complete the work for an Arts Degree at Dalhousie Univ. Miss Mary Donahoe, B.A., of Cardigan, P. E. I. has been appointed to the library staff.

HOW TO BE A MODEL LIBRARIAN

( Excerpts from "Patrons are People" prepared by the Minneapolis Public Library Staff, published by the A.L.A. Reprinted by permission)

When the patron declares, "That book is always out," there is no use arguing with him. The Model Librarian never tells him she saw it on the shelf last week with her own eyes---In some cases she can ask if some other book will do, perhaps suggesting a title...Now and then patrons declare, "There are never any good books in" or, "Doesn't this Library ever get any new books?" The Model Librarian does not lose any sleep over these. She sympathizes with the patron and knows that these outbursts are born of the moment's exasperation, just as she declared last week, "There isn't a decent dress on Nicollet Avenue, not one that I'd be caught dead in."

The Model Librarian never maintains that she is right. She does not even maintain that the Library is always right. The Patron insists that he returned the book. He gives you the exact hour, he tells you what tie he had on, and describes the girl who took his book. Does the Model Librarian pound the desk and say "The Library records must be right." She does not. That's why she is successful and has patrons following her around like swooners after crooners. She says, "Our records all agree, but, of course, we could be wrong." The Guardian Angel of Librarians, more often than not, will see to it that she is right, and then she can graciously accept the apologies of a humbled and willing patron instead of forcing a grudging acceptance of her victory on an embittered enemy.

"And when I walked in, there were three of them standing talking at the desk" complains the borrower. How was he to know that the "Three of them" were holding a solemn conclave as to whether a book should go into the 355's or the 940's. The borrower has no way of telling whether the conversation at the desk is about subject headings or the new Spring styles. The Model Librarian realizes this and makes an effort to hold all conferences in the office or when no patron is in sight. ..The Model Librarian does not chatter she is not noisy, she does not gather in groups. Still she believes in a library that is alive. Funereal whispers and gumshoe tread are not for her. She tries to preserve an atmosphere somewhere between a cathedral and a night club.

"How" asks one assistant. "do you get a patron to give his last name for a call slip without making him think you want his telephone number and a picture to stick in your mirror?" The Model Librarian admits it is hard. After long years of pausing with poised pencil over the slip and asking "And what is your last name, please?" only to be answered by an indignant glare and a truculent "why?" she has settled on another procedure.

She has found it more acceptable to hand the slips to the patron, saying, "Will you please put your last name on these? It serves to identify your books when they come to the dek."

The Model Librarian does not overload a patron. If he doesn't want to take a book, the Model Librarian doesn't urge him. She knows it is better for him to go out empty-handed today and come back later, after he has painted his porch and finished his course in Russian, than it is for him to go out with a book he does not want. "I took it just to shut her up", he tells his wife. When a patron comes, in the Model Librarian offers her help but does not press it. She leaves him free to shop about the shelves if he desires, just the way she likes to poke around the dress racks at a sale without feeling that the store detective is watching to see if she slips a \$12.95 bargain up her sleeve.

---

Maritime Library Association

Qualifications

for

Membership

Any person engaged in library work, is qualified to join the Maritime Library Association. To those working in other educational fields, and who are interested in the extension of library services throughout the Maritimes, an invitation is extended to become members of the Association.

The annual fee is \$1.00, and each member will receive a Quarterly Bulletin, which discusses library activities in the Maritimes.

The fee is payable in January to the Secretary, Miss Evelyn M. Campbell, Provincial Science Library, Provincial Museum, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

---