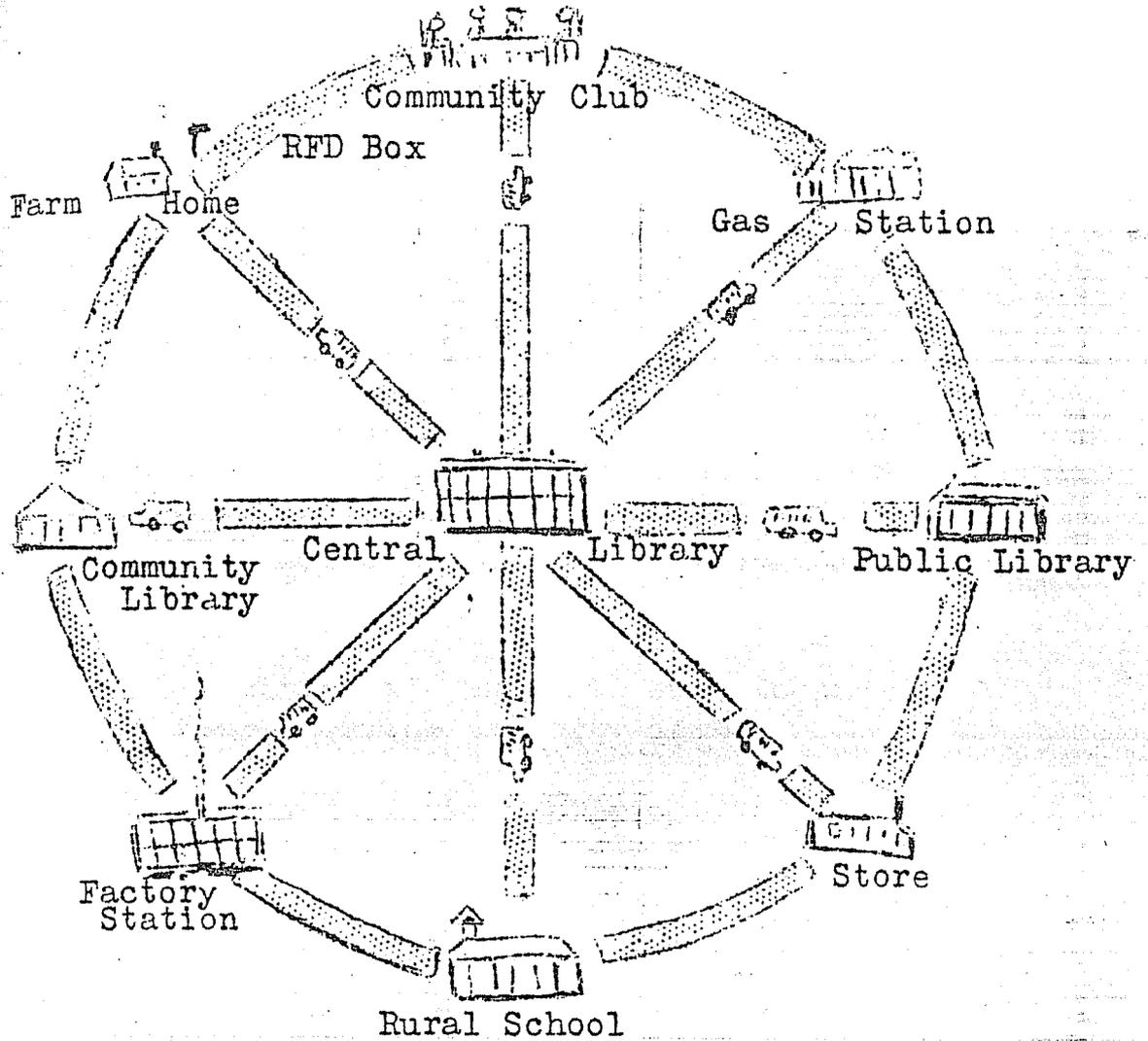


A COUNTY LIBRARY SERVES ALL THE PEOPLE



OCT. 1946 VOL. V, NO. 11

LIBRARY
LOOKOUT

LIBRARY LOOKOUT

Issued Quarterly by the West Virginia
Library Commission
Dora Ruth Parks, Executive Secretary

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"It is better to light a candle in
the darkness than to curse about
the darkness."--Chinese Proverb

WEST VIRGINIA NEEDS STATE AID FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Here are some of the facts:

1. West Virginia's national rank in public library service is forty-sixth.
2. Two-thirds of the people of West Virginia do not have access to a public library.
3. One-fifth book per person is available from public libraries in West Virginia. (Minimum requirements are at least one book per person).
4. About three-fourths of the state's population is rural.
5. Three-fourths of the people in the state are not of school age. STATE AID to public libraries will make books available to every citizen of the state through county and regional libraries. STATE AID to public libraries will enrich book collections of local public libraries which are already in existence.

PROVISIONS OF THE
LIBRARY COMMISSION'S BUDGET REQUEST
FOR EACH YEAR OF THE BIENNIUM BEGINNING 1947

I. \$75,000 STATE AID for public libraries.

A. Would the STATE AID fund require additional taxes?

No, the sum would be allocated from the general fund of the state.

B. How would STATE AID be administered?

The West Virginia Library Commission Board, whose members represent all sections of the state, would set up rules for the administration of STATE AID.

1. A portion of the fund would be allocated on an equal basis to every county meeting requirements set up by the Commission. Each county could share in this allocation regardless of wealth or population; i. e., If the amount of STATE AID allocated by the Commission to "equal participation by qualifying counties" were \$55,000, Barbour and Kanawha Counties on this basis of equality could each receive \$1,000.

2. The other portion of the fund would be allocated to county and regional demonstrations.

II. ANNUAL BUDGET needed for proper functioning of the COMMISSION during the next biennium.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|--------------------|
| Personal Services | \$15,300 | 52% | (The American |
| Current Expenses | 3,600 | 13% | Library Associa- |
| Equipment | 500 | 1% | tion recommends |
| Books | <u>10,000</u> | <u>34%</u> | 65% to 75% for |
| | \$29,400 | 100% | personal services) |

Why is an increase needed?

The Commission is a service agency and must have necessary personnel. It takes skilled workers to make books work.

1. An additional professional librarian is needed to work with counties in meeting qualifications for their participation in STATE AID.
2. A Public Library Consultant is needed to conduct demonstrations by bookmobile service in various counties and assist the Executive Secretary with advisory service to public libraries which are already established.
3. An additional typist is needed for processing and distributing new books to Commission borrowers.

IS THERE ANY NATIONAL EFFORT TO IMPROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE?

Yes. The "Public Library Demonstration Bill" was designed for this purpose. It will be reintroduced when Congress convenes.

(See Library Lookout
April, 1946. p. 3)

Would West Virginia Benefit?

Yes. Every state would receive \$25,000 per year for five years. And if West Virginia appropriated \$75,000 per year STATE AID, the federal government would match the amount annually for as long as five years.

What about federal control?

This fund would be paid to the State Treasurer and administered by the West Virginia Library Commission in the same manner as STATE AID would be administered.

YOU CAN HELP WEST VIRGINIA TO GET
MORE BOOKS IN ITS PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- I. The Board of Public Works will meet this fall to draft the State Budget Bill.

If you are interested in having more books in the public libraries of West Virginia, you can help by writing or wiring these men asking their support of STATE AID for public libraries and an increased budget for the Commission.

- II. The Budget Bill will be introduced into the legislature when it convenes the second Wednesday in January, 1947.

You can explain to your senators and delegates your interest in more books for West Virginia and ask them to vote favorably on the Library Commission's budget request.

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Write the West Virginia Library Commission, Morgantown, for answersto your questions on its 1947 Legislative Program.

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OUR BEST HUMAN INTEREST STORY OF THE MONTH

Mrs. C. F. Lyne of Shepherdstown, member of the West Virginia Library Commission, keeps a map of the stars, a poem about washing dishes, and a map showing public library service in West Virginia over her kitchen sink; and she has bad dreams at night because there are so few books for West Virginians to borrow from their libraries.

This story is a reminder to the Commission to include the following from "The Ohio Library Trustee," July, 1946, "'To the end that he may fulfil his legal obligations and may contribute to the library's success in meeting the demands of the time, both in the community and in the nation, the trustee affirms his intention of bringing to his job all the intelligence, energy, and enthusiasm he can command.'"

Mrs. Lyne is a good example of a good trustee.

PARAGRAPHS FROM ANNUAL REPORTS OF
PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN WEST VIRGINIA

HUNTINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY--"The past year has seen Huntington's seventy-fifth anniversary-- seventy-five years from a corn field to a modern American city. In 1952, the Huntington Public Library will be fifty years old.

"We have accomplished much of which we can be proud during the past year, but we have only begun in our efforts to build up efficient library service. There is no reason why, if the library continues to grow as it has in the past few years,

that its fiftieth anniversary may not find Huntington and Cabell County the proud possessors of one of the best libraries in this section of the country."

SHEPHERDSTOWN--"During the summer months, 14 weekly story hours were conducted, with 22 different persons of the community assisting.

OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY--"A public library is not expected to be a gay or exciting spot, and on the contrary, is synonymous in some minds with seclusion and dullness.*

"In what must have seemed to the general reader a revolutionary article on library service, the Saturday Evening Post for July 20, 1946, published the story of the renaissance of the Fitchburg, Massachusetts Library. Miss Ruth Hyatt, the librarian, told of changes in arrangement, rules, decoration which would make any library staff envious. But the greatest about-face was one which has crept into all kinds of public institutions; that of a philosophy of vital service to the individual....

"Miss Hyatt is fortunate in attracting the attention of a magazine whose readers are legion and are distributed through all age groups, vocations and economic stations. And all public libraries will share this spot in the limelight because each reader will compare his own public library with the one in Fitchburg. It is up to us who serve the public through books and reading, both staff and Board Members, to make our institution mean as much as possible to the citizens it was created to serve.

*Murphy, T. E. Come in and Bring Your Dog
Saturday Evening Post, July 20, 1946.

"And so we say to Ohio Countians, 'Come in and bring your dog--if you must--but do come in!'"

PARKERSBURG--"In the reading room, the library has on file 39 magazines and 10 newspapers. The magazines include many of the leading ones relating to current events, history, science, travel, and fiction. The newspapers include our own Parkersburg papers and from the cities of New York, Washington, Baltimore, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Charleston. The reading room is a popular place, many come every day to read and study."

CLARKSBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY--(a printed history) "Since the Library Board was created in 1928, it has regularly invited the incumbent City Managers to attend all meetings of the Board and without exception they have done so. Their counsel and assistance have been most helpful."

MARION COUNTY--Times West Virginian, August 4, 1946 carried these headlines: "Rosier* Announces Plans for Expansion of the County Public Library Approved." The article continues:

"...Now, with the postwar-growth of Fairmont, the opening of the New Fairmont theater, the new building of the Fairmont Wall Plaster Company store and other modernizations scheduled for the immediate future, the library wishes to keep pace and help set the pace for progress."

Reports of the WEST VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS, 1946-47, mentions libraries 22 times.

*Chairman, Marion County Library Board.

WHEN SHE WAS A GIRL

Someone I know tells the story of "when she was a girl." Her mother bought for her a book of Bible stories. It had to be ordered by mail because this little girl lived in the country. The book was taken to Sunday School every Sunday, over a period of years, or until it was completely worn out. Now it is in the bookcase at home, because it is a treasure.

When she was about seven years old, an aunt gave her Through the Looking-glass, which she hated; and she never was able to become the least bit interested in any of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. This, to her, was a peculiar characteristic, but she learned upon investigation that many other girls had the same reaction toward these stories. Unfortunately, there were no other books for her to read; and having formed a distaste for this title, there developed a distaste for reading in general.

Lisbeth Longfrock attracted her attention about two years later, probably because it was the only book in the bookcase at school which she found she could read.

In the seventh grade, she was assigned for memorization "The quality of mercy is not strained..." She and the rest of the class rebelled. "It doesn't make sense", they said. It was then the teacher told the story of the "Merchant of Venice," and this one episode gave her faith to read the rest of Shakespeare's plays, when assigned in later years.

In high school, she moved from the country and found it very difficult to adjust to the full day's schedule in a city school. Here

there was a school library and there was also a parallel reading list. A certain number of pages must be completed in biography, a certain number in poetry, and so on. She had had no great desire for reading at any time of her life, and now she was barely able to keep up with assignments. As a result, she went to the library on occasion's and asked for "the smallest book of biography you have."

Ironically enough, the same aunt who had given her the copy of Through the Looking-glass, one day wrote the girl's mother that she was working in a very large city library; and she said "This might be a type of work in which the girls would be interested." It seemed that the suggestion might be worth investigating so the girl was given a chance to work as a student assistant in the college library. As she prepared books for circulation, she became fascinated with their bright covers. She found it was fun to handle a large stack in one afternoon and to read a sentence here, a sentence there as she prepared them for circulation. Soon she was assigned a section of books to shelve and she found it was fun to take several home at a time and read the parts she wished and skip as much as her heart desired.

She became interested in librarianship as a career. She says she thinks she was probably fascinated with the idea of a job on a bookmobile, because she wanted to help other girls living on farms fill some of the lonely hours with pleasure from books rather than experience the lethargy which had been her fate, when she had nothing to do after a completely exhausting game of hide and seek with the boys from the adjoining farm.

She tells the story of the day on a bookmobile route when she went to a farm home off the main highway far back in a mountain area. It was a home much less luxurious than the owner's barn, but the home demonstration agent had finally persuaded the owner to add one more room for his growing family's comfort. Mary, a neighbor who had seen the bookmobile arrive, came across the field to exchange the books which she had borrowed from the bookmobile the preceding month. The oldest boy in the family was helping with the roof on the new room. He saw Mary and called down to the librarian "When she brings back Emily Post don't take it up, I want to read it." This was an experience which that librarian says she will never forget because it was the last spot on earth for one to expect to hear "Emily" mentioned.

And then, she tells the story of the University professor who observed her work and commented that mountain people wouldn't read those "hard books." He was much surprised when one old lady on the bookmobile route began talking with him about a biography of Nehru which she had been reading.

She expresses a belief in the power books have in people's lives, if books are available. "If one book does not satisfy the individual, he should feel that there are others within reach," she says. She believes that we can never be sure of the time an idea will take root; and that if books are available at the right moment, many ideas are born which otherwise would have never seen the light of day.