

OREGON STATE LIBRARY

SALEM

*"The Best Reading for the Greatest Number
at the Least Cost"*

Letter to Libraries, 1941, No. 2
March 1, 1941

TO OREGON LIBRARY WORKERS:

This Letter may be called a "Readers Digest," for I find I have been accumulating a number of excerpts from varied sources to pass on to you.

Thomas Jefferson advocated county libraries. One hundred thirty years ago he wrote: "I have often thought that nothing would do more good at small expense than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county to consist of a few well-chosen books, to be lent to the people of the county under such regulations as would secure their safe return in due time. These should be such as would give them a general view of other history and particular view of that of their own country, a tolerable knowledge of geography, the elements of natural philosophy, of agriculture, and mechanics. Should your example lead to this it will do great good." (Quoted in 1940 Yearbook of Agriculture, p.1163, from Washington, H.A., ed. Writings of Thomas Jefferson, v.5, 1853. Letter to John Wyche, p.448-49)

RURAL LIBRARY EXTENSION. Resolution Adopted by the Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, Baltimore, December 9, 1940. "The importance of rural education and the need for expanded library facilities cannot be over-estimated. Because of the mobility of our population, the local taxing unit is no longer solely responsible for the education of the children born in that unit. Therefore, further federal aid to education on the basis of need should be given. We urge that rural library facilities be expanded as rapidly as may be economically feasible."

FEDERAL AID. Federal aid for libraries was endorsed in a release of the American Youth Commission January 30, based on the pamphlet, Next Steps in National Policy for Youth. The statement in the pamphlet itself is rather stronger than in the release: "Libraries provide an important form of educational service which has been greatly neglected in the development of rural areas. Although the free public library may be 'as American as corn on the cob,' between 35 and 40 million rural people of the United States have never had any public library service except the highly limited services available through the rural schools and the more recent services provided in some areas through WPA library projects. Three years ago the President's Advisory Committee on Education recommended a modest plan of federal aid for rural library service through grants to the states beginning at \$2,000,000 a year. The American Youth Commission believes that this recommended plan should be revived and carried through without further delay."

AN ENGLISHMAN SPEAKS. In The Spectator, November 1, 1940, Stanley Unwin has an essay on Reading in War-Time, in which he says:

"What we often overlook in England is that there are few things which books cannot help us to do better, and that nothing delights a good bookseller or public librarian more than to give information or advice about the best books available on any subject. There are dozens of questions in which I am interested and on which I want some guidance. Fortunately I have a bookseller next door who always seems able to tell me just what I want to know. Usually the answer comes out pat, but occasionally he says; 'You must give me a few minutes.' Sure enough, when I next drop in, there are the particulars of the books I want. A good bookseller or public librarian never fails you. They are the best of friends for a time like the present.

"There are books too for every mood. Like most others I am deeply concerned about the kind of world we are going to live in after the war. I often hear people say of a famous writer: 'I should love to meet him and to hear his views on that question.' Well, we can meet these men in their books, and get something much better than a casual conversation; we can read their carefully considered opinions. But there are times when we want to forget the mess we are in. That is the moment to pick up a book which will transport us to other times and places, or afford us most necessary entertainment and relaxation.

..."It is said that a man can be known by the company he keeps. So, too, can he be known by the books he reads, because in reading them he keeps company with their authors. If we have chosen our books wisely we have enjoyed the companionship of the elect, and have done also that most satisfying thing, the cultivation of our intellectual and spiritual gardens.

"A distinguished Bishop is said to have advised people during the nightly air raids:

"To commend themselves to God;

"To read a book;

"To go to sleep.

"That seems to me peculiarly sound advice."

FOR LIBRARY TRUSTEES. "Library trustees hold the balance of power in the strengths of library service. In today's vocabulary, library boards are the bottlenecks of the library industry. As they are convinced of the native, community strengths of public libraries, in parallel degree will their libraries function with effective vigor.

"Library trustees must build and hold firm the strength of efficient, organized libraries. This is their job. They are the first and potent line of defense of library service. They are the men and women whose task is to hold library prestige and financial ability in proper relation to other more directly understood, deeply established units of community government. They guard the people's right to books. They help to build and hold community and national strength. They are one of the most important groups among the nation's constructive citizens. They are the trustees of the nation's libraries.

"To keep our freedom, we, the people, must protect every method thru which we can develop answers for the problems which we daily meet, and must try to solve. All this is not visionary, nor mere idealism. It is sound good sense. Next after the newspapers, public libraries are the information reservoir of a democracy. Their trustees must not fail, for theirs is a magnificent responsibility." (From Thirty Thousand Library Trustees, in Massachusetts Library Association Bulletin, October 1940, v.30, no.4, p.48)

"EVEN A GARDEN NEEDS PRUNING." Under this caption, the Library Journal for February 1 quotes the following from the Bulletin of the Maine Library Association for January, 1941:

"Among the reports coming in to the Bulletin the editor has found evidence of a growing realization among Maine librarians that a library, like a garden, gains by good pruning. This is particularly noticeable among the smaller libraries and it is just there that the realization is most needed. Anxious to show a book stock steadily growing in numbers, librarians and trustees are inclined to forget that a book can die and be fit only for burial, even though its covers may still be fairly good."

ANNUAL REPORTS. The majority of libraries have sent in their annual reports for 1940. A few are still missing. Is yours one of these? 'Nuff said.

LIBRARY LAWS. With this letter every Oregon library is receiving a reprint of the Laws Relating to Libraries, taken from the recently published Oregon Compiled Laws Annotated. We have even included the amendment to the county library law, passed by the 1941 legislature, which makes it possible for one county to contract with the county library of another county for service, a possibility for joint county library service which we hope will interest some of the counties with sparse population, since it will enable them to share the larger resources of an adjacent county. Each library should catalog and carefully preserve this pamphlet of Oregon library laws, since it is not likely that another edition will be published for a decade.

OREGON AUTHORS. V.L.O. Chittick's Ring-tailed Roarers; Tall Tales of the American Frontier 1830-60 (Caxton, \$3.50) will be especially enjoyed by men.

I.N. Gabrielson has written a book on Wildlife Conservation (Macmillan \$3.50).

In the introduction to his book, An American Grazier Goes Abroad (The Deseret News Press, \$2.50) Marvin Klemme says: "My purpose in making this tour was primarily to learn something of the range management, forestry, and general agricultural practices that are followed in foreign countries."

Frank Munk's The Economics of Force (Stewart, \$2) is a discussion of the economic situation in Europe by a Czechoslovakian who is now a professor at Reed College.

OREGON LIBRARY EXHIBITS.

La Grande. The public library observed Oregon's birthday, February 14, with a window display in a downtown building. The background of the display was a large red heart proclaiming Oregon's Birthday--February 14. Books about Oregon history, recollections of pioneers, and stories of early days in Oregon, with a diminutive covered wagon in the foreground, made an attractive exhibit.

In connection with an exhibit of silk screen prints which was hung in the local art center, the library displayed books containing examples of fine book typography and book illustration.

Malheur County Library, Ontario. The children's department was the scene of a patriotic display which included posters of state flags and flags of patriotic groups, postcard displays of American memorials, famous spots in history, and American universities. One Oregon map used pictures to outline early history of the state. Special Lincoln and Washington displays were set up.

Oregon State College Library, Corvallis. Pictures of European writers who have come to the United States as war refugees were exhibited in the showcase in the main hall in the library. Shown with their books were pictures of Jules Romain and André Maurois of France; Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, and Lion Feuchtwanger of Germany, and Sigrid Undset of Norway. The exhibit also included a picture of Antonina Riasanovsky of Russia, who is at present living in Eugene.

PROGRESS IN OREGON LIBRARIES, 1940.

Albany. The library grounds were re-landscaped, the woodwork of the entire upper floor revarnished, new cement work done on the outside of the building, including new steps at the main entrance, new hand railings at two of the entrances, and the upper portion of both fireplace chimneys rebuilt.

A number of gifts were received during the year, including a mimeograph machine, an oak table, and more than 100 travel books.

A.A.U.W. members cooperated by giving the children a six weeks program in July and August, most of the programs being travel talks illustrated by a projector.

Libraries were maintained in the public playgrounds, using WPA help, and the 514 children who registered borrowed 2,074 books.

Two new vertical file units were bought.

Ashland. A children's librarian with professional training was added to the staff.

Baker. Stacks for adult fiction, window drapes, a four-drawer hardwood file for the office, a typewriter, and a charging desk for the junior room were purchased.

Burns. Two new sets of shelves through the center of the room have been added, and a large reading table and children's table remodeled. There are now Venetian blinds for all the windows.

Clackamas County Library, Oregon City. More frequent trips are being made by the WPA bookmobile, and summer service was given for the first time during 1940.

During the year, the branch libraries pooled books from their libraries, and these were distributed by the bookmobile.

The County Court granted an increase of \$3,500 to the budget.

Two steel files were added to the office equipment. Shelving was built by WPA.

Oregon City. A column, Constant Reader in the Oregon City Public Library, was frequently published in the Oregon City Enterprise.

A new typewriter was added to the office equipment.

Canby Branch. Three new bookcases were added.

Sandy Branch. A new room was added to the library to be used as a reading room and children's hour room.

Coquille. The library reports gifts of money during the year from the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Coquille Woman's Club.

Deschutes County Library, Bend. The library auditorium in the new library building was completed, and 100 chairs purchased.

Circulation of books from the main library increased 8,956 volumes in 1940. Forty-three per cent of the county's population were registered borrowers.

Redmond Branch. The library added a set of the Encyclopedia Americana.

Hillsboro. There was an increase in circulation in 1940, especially in children's books. As a result of this increase, the board voted at the annual meeting to increase the amount to be spent on children's books. Two book racks were added.

The library has had a bulletin in one of the store windows, or in the local newspaper window, during most of the year.

Hood River County Library, Hood River. Several improvements and repairs were made in the building. The building has been re-roofed, the front hall and stairway kalsomined, and hall woodwork refinished.

Book talks were given by the librarian to the 4-H club, Aloha, Episcopal Guild, Business and Professional Women, Rotary, and Ladies' Aid Society.

With the help of NYA, books in the school libraries of the county were repaired.

Hospital service was begun in February, 1940. During the year, 621 books were loaned to shut-ins. Total circulation increase was 6,323 over 1939.

Cascade Locks. This station was moved to the city hall in December, 1940.

Jefferson. A desk for the librarian was purchased, and a table for the display of new books.

Joseph. Two new sections of shelves were added.

Josephine County Library, Grants Pass. The interior of the library room was redecorated, and the city council gave \$50 for the purchase of juvenile books.

Junction City. The interior of the library room was redecorated, and the city council gave \$50 for the purchase of juvenile books.

Klamath County Library, Klamath Falls. The library reports increases in circulation, borrowers, and branch library circulation. Twenty-five per cent of the county's population are registered borrowers. Children were the highest readers of non-fiction, which may be partly explained by the fact that the library serves so many of the schools. Total circulation of non-fiction to children was 76,326 volumes. Reference service figures, totalling 3,741, more than doubled 1939 figure of 1,531.

La Grande. A new front entrance to the library was erected, and fluorescent lights were installed in the children's room. The library maintained interesting window displays in three stores.

Lakeview. A new charging desk, chair, and oil heater were purchased. During the summer vacation, a story hour was conducted for the children, with 80 children enrolled.

Lebanon. The magazine rack given by the Woman's Civic Club has made the magazines more readily accessible and is perhaps one reason for the greater use of the reading room. It is also reported that more men are using the library than formerly.

McMinnville. The gift of \$135 from the McMinnville clubs enabled the library to purchase new books for the children's section.

By vote of the people in May, 1940, the library now receives one and one-half mills, instead of one mill. This increase became effective January, 1941.

Malheur County Library, Ontario. On September first, 1940, the library increased hours of opening to six extra hours per week, and is now open every night during the week.

A professionally trained assistant, a graduate of the University of California School of Librarianship, was added to the staff.

There was a gain of 22,013 over the 1939 circulation, making a total circulation of 171,653 for 1940. With only 3,887 more books than it owned in 1930, the library has more than doubled its service in the past decade.

Nyssa Branch. On March 11, 1940, the library increased its hours of opening every day from 2 until 6:30 as a result of WPA assistance.

Moro. The library room was repainted, and new shelves were built and painted.

Myrtle Point. City funds were increased \$15 per month for 1941. Registration increased by 272 over 1939.

North Bend. The library reports the purchase of a typewriter.

North Powder. The city repapered and painted the library room, put in new lights, oiled the floor, and installed a new stove.

Portland. The library received \$268 from Mary F. Failing for the Henry Failing Memorial Library.

Salem. The American Legion Auxiliary contributed a cash gift for the purchase of outstanding children's books.

Early in the year weekly book notice columns written by the library staff were established as regular features of both local newspapers.

There was an increase of 6,187 volumes in circulation over the 1939 figure. Two hundred and twenty-nine registered borrowers were added.

Sheridan. The library room was completely refinished.

Silverton. The Abridged Readers Guide was added, and the librarian reported it was of special help to the students.

Umatilla County Library, Pendleton. Two new tables and eight chairs were purchased to complete the equipment of the west reading room. The junior library window draperies were replaced with colorful gauze curtains in attractive stripes of green, rust, and yellow. A new typewriter was purchased.

In 1940, all but three of the school districts in the county pooled their library funds, amounting to \$504, with which 518 books were purchased and added to the Rural School Collection of the county library. The total number of books in this collection in December, 1940 was 3,832. Approximately four-fifths of the books in this collection are provided by county school funds, and such books are available only to the rural schools who participate in the pooling of books.

Money received from special funds during 1940 included \$308 from the Sturgis Fund, \$389 from the Lane Fund, and \$20 from the Donert Fund.

Hermiston Branch. The building was renovated, and the grounds were improved by planting shrubs and putting in a lawn.

Stanfield Branch. The library installed a magazine case of 15 shelves.

Vernonia. A new bookcase was made, and all the cases were refinished. The city installed fluorescent lighting.

NEWS OF OREGON LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS.

Clatsop County Library, Astoria. Mr. Glen Burch, formerly assistant reference librarian in the Oakland, California public library, was appointed as Clatsop County librarian, and began organizing county library service on February 17. Mr. Burch is a graduate of the University of Oregon and of the University of California School of Librarianship. He has had much experience in the adult education movement, having helped found the East Bay Adult Education council for coordination and promotion of adult education activities in the ten communities bordering the east shore of San Francisco bay. He has also had experience in leading and organizing small discussion groups, and in conducting forums.

The WPA bookmobile, formerly used in Clackamas county, will be lent to Clatsop County Library for use while the Clatsop County bookmobile is being constructed.

Corvallis. Books borrowed from the public library can now be renewed by telephone, according to Miss Evelyn Krueger, librarian. As an added service, magazines now circulate. One hour each day has been added to the time the library is open, hours now being from 1:30 to 6 and 7-9 p.m. each day except Sundays and holidays.

An NYA person has been assigned to the library for clerical work, and a WPA worker has been assigned for mending and shelving.

Books selected for high school students have been placed in a separate section so that the students can more readily find books adapted to their reading interests.

A file of the National Geographic from 1921 to date has been given to the library by W.S. Brown, professor of horticulture at Oregon State College.

Efforts will be made to increase fiction buying this year, as at present there is a higher ratio of non-fiction to fiction than is found in most libraries. This may be attributed to the fact that the library is located in a "technical-college" town.

Deschutes County Library, Bend. The library board recently authorized the sale of the lot next to the library grounds, for \$500.

A check for \$64, received from Xi chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority, for library improvements, was presented to the Board.

Forest Grove. Through the cooperation of the Woman's Club, a section of the book room will be removed for a children's reading and book room. Shelf room will be enlarged, and shelves will be lowered for the children's use.

Malheur County Library, Ontario. Two additional hours of service have been made possible with the grant of a WPA clerical project. During the present project, the library will remain open from 9 in the morning until 9 at night.

Among recent contributions to the library are two copies of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, printed in 1871. These were found in the old mining camp at Centerville, Idaho. One contains an illustration supposed to represent Sitting Bull, and more or less defends the Indians in their attempt to drive the white man from their hunting grounds. The other illustrates a group of the Ku Klux Klan and tells of the capture of some Klan members by a United States detective.

Vale Branch. The library has recently been entirely redecorated. The walls were painted a light cream, the woodwork gray, and the bookshelves a dark green. The linoleum is a mottled pattern in battleship gray.

Marshfield. The library is to have new lights for the main floor reading rooms.

The children's room in the basement is now complete. It has its own entrance, and its own bookshelves and records. It is to be used exclusively by young people through junior high school age. A new edition of Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia has been added to the collection for this room. Six indirect lighting fixtures have been installed, and two circular tables have been built around support pillars. A plaque on the door reads, Agnes Sengstacken Children's Room, honoring Mrs. Henry Sengstacken, who has been active in local library work for many years.

With more room in the main library, it is the plan of the library board to keep one large room in the main part for fiction books, and the other large room for research volumes and non-fiction.

Regular story hours are being held each Saturday for the children, with a program for school children, and another for pre-school.

Portland (Multnomah County). Backstage at Central Library is the title of a page in the rotogravure section of a recent issue of the Oregon Journal. A series of pictures of library workers and patrons shows each process in returning a book to the library and making it ready for circulation again.

Two pictures in a Sunday issue of the Oregon Journal show the WPA bookmobile giving service to rural patrons. This is the second bookmobile in use in Multnomah County. The two trucks alternate their schedules, calling at county schools every two weeks, in addition to maintaining service for adults.

Members of the library staff took opportunity to learn how their voices sounded over the telephone, through installation of a "voice mirror," lent by the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company. Use of the equipment is designed to increase efficiency in public relations.

Belmont-Hawthorne Branch. Miss Mary Phillips, branch librarian, reports a noticeable increase in the last six weeks, in requests for technical books. Shipbuilding activity in the Portland area, and demand for skilled labor is undoubtedly the cause for the new interest in technical books, according to Miss Phillips.

Lombard Branch. Miss Lilly Fox, librarian since 1928, has recently retired from active library work. Miss Ruth E. Hewitt has been appointed supervisor of the three libraries in the Peninsula district, including the St. Johns, Lombard, and University Park branches. She will be assisted by Miss Elizabeth Howard, children's librarian, and Mrs. Elizabeth Barthel, clerical staff member. Miss Hewitt has been librarian of the University Park Branch since September, 1939.

Troutdale Branch. Repairs to the city hall, which was damaged by a recent blaze, have been completed, and the library is in use again.

Seaside. At a program given under the sponsorship of the literature department of the Woman's Club, reviews of late books were given by Mrs. Elizabeth McKay, librarian. Interspersing her talk were bits of dialog introduced by typical visitors to the simulated library, such as the small boy who preferred Dick Tracy stories; his harassed mother; the intellectual who returned home with a book, How to Hold Your Husband; the woman who found the library a warm place to wait for her husband; the bored bathing beauty who wanted a good exciting murder story to keep her awake at the beach.

Tillamook. Members of the library board with the city council and their wives as guests recently honored Mrs. George Kiger with a banquet in tribute for her many years of service on the board. Mrs. Kiger has resigned the office of secretary-treasurer, although she will remain a member of the book selection committee. Members of the board, and of the city council, gave brief talks expressing appreciation for Mrs. Kiger's work. Presentation of a dictionary and a fountain pen was made to Mrs. Kiger, who responded with gratitude and words of appreciation for all who had been associated with her in library work.

The University Women, in cooperation with the library, are furnishing specially selected books for patients in the hospitals. A new selection is taken every two weeks, special requests being granted whenever possible.

Umatilla County Library, Pendleton. Mrs. E.C. Willcutt, who has been children's librarian at the Umatilla county library for the past nine years, has been granted a six months leave of absence by the county library board to accept a position in Salem. She will be instructor in salesmanship and related subjects under the Department of Vocational Education. This is a new project under the George-Deen federal act. Miss Margaret June Martin of Seattle will fill the position as children's librarian during the absence of Mrs. Willcutt. Miss Martin is a graduate of the University of Washington School of Librarianship.

College and University Libraries.

Oregon State College Library, Corvallis. Miss Marjorie Utt, circulation assistant, has received notice of her appointment as librarian at Fort Lewis, Washington. Miss Utt has been a member of the library staff since 1939. She has a certificate of librarianship from the Los Angeles library school and a master's degree from the University of California. Before coming to Corvallis she was librarian of the California State Medical Library at Los Angeles.

Mr. Loren G. Strawn has been appointed reference assistant in the Oregon State College Library, and began work February 17. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Idaho, and is a graduate of the University of Washington Library School. Since June 1940 he has been reference assistant in the University of Washington Library.

University of Oregon Library, Eugene. May 3 will be library day at the University of Oregon, and will see the completion of the Philip Brooks room, which will house the library of the late Philip Brooks and a number of rugs, art objects, and other gifts made by his widow, now residing in Portland. The funds for adding the new room to the library are also the gift of Mrs. Brooks.

Arrangements for library day and for the annual library dinner are being made by the Friends of the Library Association of the University.

John Studebaker, U.S. Commissioner of Education, says: "When people are burning books in other parts of the world, we ought to be distributing them with greater vigor; for books are among our best allies in the fight to make democracy work."

Cordially yours,

Harriet C. Long
Librarian

HCL:BM
Enc.