Andrew Carnegie's Gifts To Georgia Libraries

• HOW easily we accept the good things that come our way, only giving passing thought to the source from which they came or to the vision and planning that lay behind such gifts as those that the patron saint of libraries, Andrew Carnegie, has given to the world. After reading Purton J. Hendricks' two volume life of Andrew Carnegie, in anticipation of this paper and of the celebration of Mr. Carnegie's birthday next month, I feel that it should be required reading for every librarian in America and the British Isles. This would be no hardship, as its author not only has made an inexhaustible study of his hero's life—and hero he is to Mr. Hendricks—but he has known how to present him as a living, dynamic personality, and if you will live with this book during your spare moments for two weeks as I have done, you will begin to realize how Andy's (his friends' name for him) ideas have affected the trend of library development far more than would be indicated by the brick and stone of buildings.

A few public libraries existed before Andrew Carnegie's time and would inevitably have increased in number without the impetus of his building program, but it might have been many years before the idea of a nation-wide chain of libraries especially created to meet the needs of the common man would have taken root. Witness what slow progress we are making, for instance, in spreading the idea to include the rural residents of the country and particularly of Georgia. The idea would have been exactly the kind to appeal to Andrew Carnegie, who considered that one of the greatest causes of social backwardness was ignorance, of which the obvious cure was enlightenment, and that by stimulating the growth of the public library system he was providing the means for enlightenment for all who were willing to use them. In defending his use of wealth for libraries and other educational purposes, instead of for direct charity, he remarked: "I am not so much concerned about the submerged tenth as in the swimming tenth." I thing I shall never again look on at young people—or for that matter, older people, too—seeking from books a better understanding of today's complicated problems, or profiting by the experience of others as recorded in print, to make themselves more efficient members of society, without thinking of them as the "swimming tenth," and perhaps when our library system covers the state as completely as our public school system now does, we can reduce that percentage at least to the swimming ninth.

Hardly less important than his giving the buildings was his insistence upon civic responsibility for public libraries, through his demanding a promise of an annual appropriation for maintenance of the library before a building was given. "Do not wish to be remembered," he once said, "for what I have given, but for that which I have persuaded others to give." Thus, not only did he insure support for those specific libraries, but he strengthened the principle of public support of libraries, which made it easier to get municipal funds for other cities which had failed to seize the opportunity to get a Carnegie building, and for extension of the facilities of Carnegie libraries as their increased use demanded added support. We hope that the sentiment thus created may have its influence on our efforts to establish the principle of state, as well as civic, responsibility for library support. So strongly did he believe in this part of his program that although the library at Pittsburgh formed the nucleus for and became a part of the heavily endowed Carnegie Institute, with its art gallery, museum, music hall, school of technology, and other educational features, he continued to insist that this special department be supported by the city of Pittsburgh. When it was suggested that the Institute relieve the taxpayers of their obligation for maintaining the library, Mr. Carnegie replied: "I would rather throw the money into the sea. The public libraries are the property of the city of Pittsburgh. . . . The more the library trustees can get the city to contribute for library purposes, I believe the better for the city, but that is a matter for the Mayor and Council to decide."

Looking over the reports from the Carnegie libraries, which you so kindly and promptly sent me, I find that only five were without libraries altogether, but in every case they gave a very limited service with little prospect of improvement. From the list supplied by Miss Whiteman-Scott in her 1930 Report of the Georgia Library Commission, "in which she reviews "Ten Years of Progress in Georgia," I learned that twenty towns in Georgia were given public library buildings, that Atlanta received funds for three branches as well as the main building, and Savannah has two Carnegie buildings, one for the white and one for the colored population. Six colleges, also, in Georgia owe their library buildings to Carnegie, two of them being for Negroes, although I presume the one at Atlanta University has now been replaced by the handsome new library recently built there.

The first grant was made to Atlanta in 1899. At that time, the capital of the State had a small library of twenty thousand volumes housed in a former residence and there was an average of about one circulation a year per book. At the end of the first year in the new building, the circulation was five times as great, and last year it passed the million mark. The number of registered borrowers jumped from seven hundred to ten thousand the first year, and now totals sixty-five thousand.

The next towns to be honored were Cordele, Dublin, and Newman, all of which were awarded their buildings in 1903. As these were all small places, it is not surprising that the first two had previously had no library, and Newman only three hundred and fifty volumes, and knowing Mr. Carnegie as I now feel that I do, I imagine he took special pleasure in introducing such communities to free libraries for the first time. Unfortunately, we have no statistics of the beginning of the Cordele library, but Dublin has tripled her circulation since 1903 and has over four times as many borrowers as she did at the end of the first year, while Newman has five times the circulation she had in 1903 and eight times as many borrowers. Cuthbert has the newest Carnegie public library in Georgia, having built hers in 1917, but Savannah was not far ahead, as she moved into her present building in 1916. Later donations, however, included the Auburn Avenue Branch of the Atlanta Carnegie Library, for the Negroes, and the library of the Ft. Valley High and Industrial School for Negroes. Money expended for these buildings amounted to well over half a million dollars, $508,766.00 for public libraries and $171,000 for college libraries.
Library statistics were not so care-
fully kept in the days before the Lib-
rary Commission checked up on
us, so that it is impossible to report
what was the circulation in the pre-
Car negie libraries. Only thirteen lib-
raries sent figures for the first year
in the new buildings, but they showed
a combined circulation of $34,085,
which seems very small indeed when
we compare the totals for those same
libraries for 1934, which came to 1,-
797,798, or over five times as many.
So far, we have spoken chiefly of
public libraries, as they were Mr.
Carnegie's first enterprise, and the
one by which he is best known, but
many college libraries, too, have
several of them received gifts from
the Carnegie funds. The $171,000.00
for college library funds was dis-
tributed between Agnes Scott at De-
catur, Fort Valley High and Indus-
trial School for Negroes, Peabody
College of Education at Athens,
Georgia School of Technology at
Atlanta, Mercer University at Ma-
con, and Atlanta University. I be-
lieve I am right in saying that none
of these institutions could boast of
a separate library building until An-
drew Carnegie provided them, their
small collection of books being housed
in single rooms and, according to re-
ports from librarians, making little
impression on either students or
faculty.

In making these gifts to Georgia’s
small and struggling colleges, An-
drew Carnegie was carrying out the
mission he had always in mind—the
democratic leveling of mass intelli-
gegence. He seldom made gifts to the
great universities already equipped
and heavily endowed, but favored
those colleges that drew their stu-
dents largely from their own locality.
The Carnegie Corporation has
given further help to two Georgia
colleges through gifts of money for
books. These include $15,000.00 to
Agnes Scott, $8,000.00 to Wesleyan
College, which sums were used to
build up the reference collections,
fill in gaps in existing sets, and to
purchase sets of continuations, and
add many needed basic books. In
addition, the librarian of each of
these colleges was given a scholarship
for one year’s graduate study at the
University of Michigan.

If Mr. Carnegie were here today, he
would be pleased to learn that
Agnes Scott, struggling along in
1911 with 5,000 volumes, probably
ill assorted had outgrown its present
building and that the library at
Peabody College of Education voices
the general opinion in saying she
"considers the library the heart of
the campus, attracting students for
much voluntary reading as well as
class assignments."

Andrew Carnegie believed in get-
ing the best person available to do
any important piece of work. Criti-
cized for the large salaries he paid
his skilled workmen in the steel in-
dustry, he replied he could not af-
ford to do otherwise, and, realizing
that library work carried on on a
professional basis required special
training, he gave the funds necessary
to found the Atlanta Library School
and, followed by the Carnegie Cor-
poration, has given generous sums
annually for its support. Since 1905,
$175,000.00 in all has been given;
the present annual amount being
$10,000.00. In addition, $1,650.00
was given in 1927 for a summer In-
stitute for Librarians, $1,850.00 in
1931 for bibliographical material,
and, in that same year, a graduate
scholarship of $1,500.00. This brings
the total amount of contributions to
what is now the Emory University
Library School to $181,000.00. This
school was, until recent years, the
only fully accredited library school
in the South and its graduates are
not only helping to raise the standard
of librarianship in Georgia, but in
the whole South; in fact, in the
whole country.

One of its graduates and one who
directed its course almost upward
for many years is Tommie Dora
Barker, and the Carnegie Corpora-
tion signaled her honor and, thru her,
Georgia, by financing her work as
Regional Field Director for the
South from 1931 to 1935, and we
are all gratified to know the support
for the continuation of the position
has been assumed by the American
Library Association.

I cannot leave the subject of Car-
genie’s benefactions to Georgia li-
braries without speaking of the pres-
ence in our libraries of many books
of great value that are the result
of his contributions in other fields.
The Savannah Public Library re-
cieved regularly, and doubtless this is
to the entire series known as the
Savannah series of the International
Mind. This organization was
created in 1910 with an endowment
of $10,000,000, and has for its goal
the abolition of international war.
Its work is that of "collecting all as-
certainable facts about war, it’s
causes, its conduct. It’s offices are
found in every capital, its researches
are at the disposal of every govern-
ment and every people, its publica-
tions portray diplomatic history,
especially that of modern times, in a

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fullness not attainable elsewhere." Mr. Hendricks comments: "A cata-
clysm so great as the World War is merely an episode in its history; it has survived that, and not impos-
sibly it will survive others. Whatever backslidings the nations may know, the Carnegie Endowment will patiently continue its work." At pres-
ent the Savannah Public Library possesses 143 of these books and pamphlets, which would have been prohibitive if available through pur-
chase alone.

Another gift of importance was made to Atlanta University in 1933, when the Corporation presented it with a collection of prints and art books valued at not less than $2,500. While not gifts, nevertheless valuable additions to our libraries, are those books and magazine articles inspired by the Carnegie Institution, ranging from important monographs for the specialist to profusely illus-
trated pamphlets and magazine arti-
cles suitable for the popular mind. These cover every field of science being investigated by the research workers in the employ of the Insti-
tution and the account given in Mr. Hendricks' book of their activity is fairly breath taking, showing as it does what important discoveries they are making in the fields of archae-
ology, biology, nutrition, physical geography, history, and astronomy.

Mt. Wilson Observatory in Californ-
ia is a department of the Institu-
tion. Many of the scientists whose names are on the backs of books in our libraries have based their con-
cclusions on experiments at this ob-
servatory, among them being the first director, Dr. George Ellery Hale, author of the "New Heavens," a title inspired by a remark of Car-
genie's; Einstein, who traveled to Mt. Wilson to clinic his theories of relativity; Shapley, who wrote "The Universe of Stars," Sir Arthur Ed-
dington, author of "Expanding Uni-
verse" and many other volumes on astronomy; and Sir James Jeans, whose "Universe Around Us" and other contributions have had scores of readers.

Dr. Shapley says that the extent of astronomical knowledge has been doubled since 1910 and a large part of the new information is derived from researches at Mt. Wilson. We who regard the library's most im-
portant function to be an agency for the diffusion of knowledge cannot ignore our debt to Andrew Carnegie for using his millions in the pursuit of "more light."

And placed last for emphasis, I mention the $2,000,000 endow-
ment fund to the American Library

Association, the benefits of which come to Georgia libraries equally with libraries in every part of the country. The Carnegie buildings roused communities to a new con-
sciousness of the need for libraries publicly supported. The American Library Association has planned and engineered the development of ex-
ist ing libraries by constantly work-
ing to gain for them professional standing together with an adequate salary scale for their staffs; by cal-
culating attention to new fields for ex-
pansion and suggesting new ways for libraries to co-operate with each other; by keeping the librarian in-
formed of new developments in his field through professional books and the American Library Association Bulletin; and helping him direct oth-
ers to the books they need through booklists and manuals; by encourag-
ing other Foundations to contribute to library progress; and in countless other ways. In addition, the Associa-
tion is working to extend the lib-
rary field so that it will embrace rural as well as urban dwellers and to secure Federal recognition and aid through the establishment of Federal library agency. All of this could not be done without the fi-
nancial help from the Carnegie Cor-
poration, which makes possible a strong headquarters staff and funds with which to operate.

To sum up, Georgia has to thank Andrew Carnegie for thirty library buildings, costing in all $674,765.00. Of these, six are college buildings, including one teachers' college, one school of technology, one college for teachers, one co-educational univer-
sity, and two schools for Negroes; of the remaining twenty-four, three are branches of the Atlanta Carnegie Library, one of them for colored readers, one is the library for the colored in Savannah, and the rest are general public libraries.

Colleges have received, in all, $22,0-
000.00 for the purchase of books and two $1,500.00 scholarships; the Atlanta Library School and its suc-
cessor, the Emory University Lib-
ary School, have received a total of $181,000.00. These sums make a grand total of $805,516.00. In addi-
tion, Georgia has had her share of benefit from the American Library Association Endowment Fund, the keys to which are held by a Regional Field Agent in the South, the gifts of the publications of the Carnegie Endowment for the Promotion of Peace. Indirectly, our libraries are, and through them, our citizens have shared in the researches conducted by the Carnegie Institution.

Lastly, we can point with pride to

the man to whom we owe so much, for he was what is generally spoken of as an alread man. Bending his keen mind to the amassing of a large fortune, he never let this pursuit monopolize him. The cultivation of his mind through travel, reading, and asso-
ociation with the thinkers as well as
the doers of his day boomed as large in his program as making steel. He never regarded his wealth as anything but a trust and continually asserted it would be a disgrace to die rich. After his death, there was found put away among his papers a memorandum written when he was thirty-three, in which he pledged himself to devote all his "surplus wealth to benevolent purposes." From this plan he never deviated.

He could quote whole scenes from Shakespeare and was particular in calling up appropriate quotations from his plays and from the poetry of Robert Burns. He was interested in every social and political event of the day, and the list of his own writings fills three and one half pages of Mr. Hendricks' book. He was the associate of presidents and kings, and an intimate friend of Gladstone, Morley, Herbert Spen-
er, Blaine, and others.

The nation honored his hundredth birthday on November 25th. I hope that every Georgia library took ad-
vantage of that occasion to acknowl-
edge its debt to Andrew Carnegie.

* Paper presented at the 1935 meet-
ing of the Georgia Library Association in Columbus.

A National Ideal

It is a theory of our American form of government that, given the rudiments of an education and free access to the truth, the people are equal to the task of selfgovernment. Whether this be true or not, we Americans are steadfast in our de-
termination to act on that premise and the three principal agencies for the discovery and dissemination of truth—the church, the school, and the press—must accept the respon-
sibility and strive for the realization of the national ideal.—Lee A. White.

The average cost of one day's edu-
cation per child is about 50 cents. It costs more than a dollar a day to keep a prisoner in jail and there are no week-ends and summer vaca-
tions to be deducted.

The major depressions of 1857, 1882, 1893, 1907, and 1931, left the schools in better condition than they found them. In education less im-
portant today than in the years gone by.