

## WIDENING CIRCLES

## 1

## BOOKWAGONS

Besides providing library service in the schools, we worked very hard in the early years to find country stores and other places in neighborhoods that would permit us to leave Library Deposits there. As I have said, we didn't even have a headquarters library building then, much less Branches. When the proprietor was willing to push items such as barrels of "dills", hoops of cheese, jars of syrup, cans of snuff, etc., further down and set a shelf or two aside for "Library Center", we quickly took advantage of his friendliness and extended the service. We had maintained these collections for a good many years, until we were in a position to build Branch Libraries county by county. Often these small deposits were in private homes. One in a remote rural area was located in a Fourth Class Post Office — till Uncle Sam said "no".

One of our more interesting accomplishments was to maintain one such deposit on a rolling store. I followed Burton Roberts and his Rolling Store out of Roosterville one day to see what happened. It was fabulous! A number of his customers checked out books before moving on to buy salt, brooms, candy, snuff, bread, or what-have-you. It was a very warm and personal service, with books carefully selected (generally by request in advance "for the next trip") to suit the interests of the individuals on the route of the rolling store. Another unique thing about it was that our Roosterville Store deposit also fed the Rolling Store! We had to be on our toes, believe me to keep them both properly stocked. My biggest regret was that I could not know all the people personally; but by 1949 we were serving the people via twenty-two country stores. Of course there were drawbacks and weaknesses in this type of library center. It proved to be expensive. It was often difficult to get the books returned in time for exchange. Our losses became severe; but meanwhile, we "sold" the Library Program by service. The people accepted us as friends in spite of the fact that the

books were sometimes filled with colorful — or is it “heady”? — language, especially the light westerns of the day and other books of a more ephemeral nature, and the youngsters, knowing it, availed themselves of the opportunity to check them out. “Intellectual Freedom” constituted no more than two words in the dictionary in those days of our library pioneering across the rural communities. We were trying hard to meet them where they were. Once in a while we were criticized by parents who were upset because their children had access to what they termed “trash”.

In this day and time, with television, movies, as well as many books, freely sprinkled with four letter words once never used outside the gutter, our Book Selection has drawn praise from all sides. It is recognized throughout the Service Area that the library carefully chooses its titles from standard selection tools, with a written book selection policy approved by the Governing Board and reviewed annually, used as a guideline.

Our home Library Centers were looked upon with great favor. It was a more personal approach, working so well that to this day, the library continues the policy of opening up NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY CENTERS in private homes far from main thoroughfares and Library Branches. Sometimes the rewards from this service were more significant than words can express — once in a while, even costly.

Leroy Childs once felt moved to go off the “beaten track” (Bookmobile Route) near Hiram to help three little children — two sisters and a brother — who were hungry for books. During the summer, their mother worked as a maid and her hours did not permit her to meet the Bookmobile to select the books. The three children rode two bikes (two doubled on one wheel) for a couple of miles or so to “catch” the Bookmobile at a junction. Leroy worried about the children and decided to drive up the narrow, dirt road to the little rural house to see for himself and to keep the small children from going so far alone.

When he backed the vehicle up to leave, he brought down the electric wiring! Checking, he discovered the whole place would be in darkness unless the wires were restored. Assuring the kids he would get help, he turned the Bookmobile towards Douglasville, the nearest Georgia Power office, and would not leave staisfied with promises of the repairs being accomplished but stayed to accompany the service men over into Paulding County to the house. He remained with them till the electricity was on again.

Helen Bailey, our excellent Extension Librarian for ten years until she retired — told me she had the same experience near Centralhatchee once, in the backyard of a crippled woman's home. This lady felt the Bookmobile was just the "nicest thing" that ever happened to her. Fortunately her son came along and restored the wiring.

Back in the early 1950's, we opened up a community center at Kents' Store in Centralhatchee, a New England type village, in Heard County. Teallie and Jim Kent operated the store (which no longer exists). Teallie was a large, happy, outgoing woman who loved us so much that I believe she looked forward to the chats we had on every subject under the sun more than almost anything else. Whenever we drove the Bookmobile up to the store to "freshen" the collection she would rush out to greet us. We enjoyed her just as much. It constituted a real social visit. Part of this mutual admiration hinged on the fact that she loved to read, as did Jim, her husband. She always hugged her "book lady" and pushed me along into the store to sit a spell and drink a soda pop and eat a hunk of cheese. She would have already separated the books, so that the ones the neighborhood had finished reading were stacked and ready for me to pick up. The list of subjects people were interested in and the titles requested for the next visit was prepared and waiting my perusal.

In the early fifties after we had put our first big Bookmobile on the road, something of a novelty in Georgia, Margaret Shannon, a feature writer on the Staff of **The Atlanta Journal** had called to say she would like to come right over to gather material for a story on it. Of course we were delighted. Incidentally, when our Bookmobile left the factory in Ohio with the name **West Georgia Regional Library** in prominent lettering quite visible, along with county names, someone the route "up Nawth" exclaimed to our driver: "Going to Georgia! Never heard of such a thing. All these go North." She picked the date and it so happened that the run on that day included stops in Heard and Carroll Counties.

At Centralhatchee I particularly wanted her to meet Teallie Kent and over at Ephesus, Vivian Rogers, so she could learn first-hand about a fine library-store center and an effective library-home center, with articulate people to "tell all". Of course word got around that Margaret Shannon would be with me that day. Vivian and Teallie began watching out for our arrival long before we hove up in sight.

Vivian is a very special person, full of happy ideas that have to do with giving people extra joy and attention. She and Lonnie (her husband) really care about the library program. As a matter of fact, they helped us get the Heard County Branch Library set up in 1971-72

and she is currently on the Board of West Georgia Regional Library, too.

Well, this time she was ready for us with a mighty pleasant surprise. As the people from the neighborhood browsed and selected books, they carried on a constant chatter with Margaret. They checked out books and went on their way. Margaret continued to talk, asking Vivian about the values of library service to the community as she saw it, living there and experiencing the program in action. Then came the big idea. Vivian said:

“Let’s sit and talk on the front porch where it is cool. I have a freezer of homemade ice cream we can enjoy.”

We repaired posthaste to the inviting rockers on the porch where we soon were spooning delicious vanilla ice cream and recalling yarns about the Library-On-Wheels.

When we left, Margaret asked whether or not this was the usual happening. I said good things were constantly being done for us; but that Vivian was something special, as I had learned shortly after discovering her.

We did not hurry any stop that day; hence we arrived at Kent’s store about an hour late. My friend Teallie rushed out to greet us as usual:

“You’re late! You’re real late! The Gentrys wanted to see you this trip but they gave up and went home.”

“I am so sorry to be late,” I said. Taking her aside, I asked: “Who are the Gentrys?”

“Didn’t I tell you about them? They come to the store from their home about eight miles back in the country every two weeks. They always come the day you have been with the Bookmobile to change books. They drive over in their one-horse wagon. They take books back home and friends round about come there to check them out. Today they decided they just **had** to meet you; so they came early.” I was amazed!

After finishing the work for the day and bidding Margaret Shannon adieu, I called the high school librarian at Centralhatchee, Mozelle Smith (now an outstanding high school librarian in DeKalb County, Georgia). She knew everybody in the county, I think. Telling her about the experience, I asked whether or not she would go with me over to the settlement.



"Come on down Saturday morning," she promised, "and I'll go show you the way and introduce you to the family. I'm not a bit surprised. You should be proud of all the interest aroused here since this library program started."

True to her word, Mozelle was waiting for me at her home the next Saturday and we drove across some very bad, rutted country roads — seven and one-half miles worth — to reach the Gentry homeplace. When we arrived, the members of the family flocked around us like chickens, chattering away with great excitement.

Oh, my, they were an interesting group. There was the mother, Hester, who enjoyed reading Shakespeare in between the canning of pears and peas, or working in the fields. Dave, the father, was a hard working rural farmer, devoted to his work and his family — and to his reading. He encouraged the children to use the library. Dave and Hester had seven children — six girls and a boy. I learned some interesting things by visiting and talking freely with them. You see, every morning (during the school year) the children would walk about five miles to Loftin (a crossroads community at the edge of Ephesus) to catch a schoolbus to Centralhatchee. In the afternoon they worked beside their father in the field, planting corn, chopping cotton, ploughing behind a mule, or what-not, depending upon the season and the need. At night they made popcorn balls or parched peanuts — always having an eye on some good book or two awaiting their attention. During the cold months there was still time to divide up into teams and play basketball. (Basketball forever and a day has been the number one sport in the country around here, and every self-respecting family with children growing up has at least one goal post not far from the house on a tree or barn for the youngsters to practice shooting goals.)

"What sort of books do you like the best?" I asked them. They all tried to answer at once.

They all sang out: "Shakespeare's plays, **Gone With the Wind**, **The Matchlock Gun**, **Millions of Cats**, Zane Grey books, **President's Lady**, **The Silver Chalice**, **Strawberry Girl**, **Robin Hood**, **Curious George . . .**"

After Mozelle and I had gotten back into the car to leave, I leaned out of the window to say to them:

"Well, I just want all of you to know that the world seems to be a little better place since I have learned about you. You are the reason for the library program. As I continue to carry our program out into the region to who knows where, I will have you with me in spirit as a shining example of what it's all about. I'll never forget you or the pleasure of seeing all of you here."

Their story was to take on an added dimension later, featuring the horse and the wagon. It is fascinating, too, how sometimes we are able to see clearly the hold-over of the influence of reading in the home, translated into some concrete delineation of character as well as action.

One of the Gentrys — Janice Gentry Todd — recently was named Heard County Librarian by the Library Board. At the time, I did not know she was one of the fabulous Gentry family. I had not seen her for many years. Books opened up the world for Janice. Her love for reading is deep-seated. It has spilled over quietly to impress those around her.

A while ago I decided to re-visit Teallie Kent and the Gentrys. As I drove into Centralhatchee, I turned aside to Teallie's house only to learn from a neighbor that Teallie was in the hospital at Carrollton. Immediately I made my way to Tanner Memorial Hospital and walked into Teallie's room.

You know, there are some people who have a built-in kindness apparatus and neither time nor circumstance can change one iota that enveloping feeling of gladness one derives from being in their company. Such a person is Teallie Kent. I experienced something of this feeling upon entering her room. Peeping around the door, I saw this brown-eyed face crinkle into a broad grin:

"I know you won't remember me," I began . . .

"Edith Foster!" she broke in quickly. "As if I could ever forget."

We both laughed out of pure joy, then talked at length of people who were no longer with us, and others who had grown up and taken on their own adult responsibilities since their childhood days. The beauty of that effervescent personality just reached out and enfolded me, though at the time, she was so weak she could not even pull up the cover on her bed. We spoke of the Gentrys and my plan to drive back out there.

"Oh, darling," she said, "there's no one there now at the old place. Dave and Hester and the boy are all dead. The girls married and moved away."

"Do you remember the visit that Margaret Shannon made to get our story?" I asked Teallie.

"Oh, I'll never forget. You were late that day. The Gentrys — Dave and Hester — had the longest faces when they missed meeting you and getting a "fresh" collection of books. Jim felt so bad about it that after you all had gone, he told me to box up some books I thought they'd all like and he'd drive out there and take 'em.

"You know, one time the Gentrys would come, driving their one-horse wagon, select a lot of books and buy groceries for their family and the Greys. Next time the Greys would come in their wagon and do that."

"Who were the Greys?" I wondered. "You never mentioned them to me."

"The Gentrys and the Greys sorta looked after the neighborhood. They took turns driving up for books."

"Actually," I thought aloud, "those were 'Bookwagons' instead of 'Bookmobiles'. This is absolutely fabulous."

As I left that blythe spirit at the hospital and went on to more mundane responsibilities, I reminded myself that it is everyone's right to have access to the wonderful world of books. This business of library service will never be done. It moves out into ever widening circles.

## 2.

### "GRAN'PA, HE AIN'T"

My work with the public became quite diversified during the early years in Carrollton. I made talks to P.T.A.'s, to civic and cultural clubs; participated in panel discussions; occupied the pulpit in two rural churches as guest lay speaker; gave many story hours to children; presented programs for youth groups at school, at Day Camps, at church; and worked closely with West Georgia College in its famous "College in the Country" project. The last named service was diversified in itself as I frequently acted as liaison in the community, putting up exhibits, chairing meetings, and introducing foreign guests to the community "colleges" whenever I worked with this project. It was my custom to take the Library-on-Wheels to indicate the inter-relationship between the college and our public library program.

I was busy from early morning till late at night, particularly after our own converted Station Wagon was put on the road, (and this was still the case in 1951, when we purchased our first "real" brand-new Bookmobile). I frequently drove them in my dreams, so that for all intents and purposes I was the "library lady" twenty-four hours a day. The calls upon my time increased, but my eagerness to meet requests for help I believe paid off. In a sense we were "selling the program", picking up believers, securing the future of the early **Carroll-Heard Regional Library** — and hopefully, of other such potential public library programs across the state of Georgia.

I guess we were causing a stir in the neighborhood, because after completing two years of service, the Haralson County Board of Education requested that we include their county in the library program. We were elated, to say the least, to be asked to enlarge the area in the fall of 1946. It did necessitate the changing of our name. I proposed to our Regional Library Board that we honor West Georgia College by naming our library area for that institution. We did not foresee that twenty-five or thirty other agencies would eventually name themselves "West Georgia", with no significance as far as the college was concerned. Be that as it may, we **did** re-name our library system to pay tribute to the College and to include Haralson County.

Before the third county joined our region, demands for materials were already increasing so rapidly that before the end of the second winter, I was beginning to experience a difficulty in physically handling the corrugated boxes full of books; besides, there was no way for the people to browse and pick books for themselves in this type of container.

I explained the problem to my board. I knew it was almost impossible because of post-war conditions to purchase any kind of vehicle; but I had been thinking seriously of the possibility of converting a Station Wagon into a Utility Bookmobile or Traveling Library, if one could be bought. They explained to me about the "priority" lists (war years syndrome); but they agreed to put in our order if one could be found.

President Ingram called shortly after the Board meeting to tell me that "Pomp" Shaeffer, a prominent Carrollton industrialist, and public-spirited civic leader, was third in line to receive a FORD STATION WAGON through the Carrollton Agency. Pomp sent me word that he would see to it that the name of the Library was listed instead of his name, so that we would be assured of securing our first Bookmobile — possibly within six months. It took only about four months, because others also stepped aside to help us out.

Two civic organizations — the Pilot Club and the Beta Sigma Phi's of Carrollton — assumed responsibility for funding the down payment for the wagon as well as raising the money for payments till the wagon was paid for! The Pilot Club sparked this entire project. I have great respect and admiration for this and other Carrollton civic and cultural clubs.

We were still operating out of the basement of the old college library. Our book service to Carrollton people was through the small outlet in the city hall. This meant not only exchanging collections

constantly but also purchasing books that would become a permanent part of the headquarters library because I knew that one day Carrollton's library would be the headquarters for the region.

The Station Wagon came and we were at last in the Bookmobile business. I drew my own plans for converting the Station Wagon: the two front seats were removed and the jump seat moved up to become the driver's seat. Both front doors were retained intact, as was the left side door, but the right side door was permanently locked. Along that side of the car from just behind the front seat to the rear, two three-shelf book stacks were built. On the left side, the stacks began just behind the side door, extending to the back of the wagon.

Down the middle, two boards were installed on either side for tracks. Two boxes filled with oversized and picture (or easy) books for "small frys" were kept and then moved along the tracks. The rear door was let down for a serving base. A low stool was kept handy just behind the driver's seat so patrons could sit down while examining books. The entire conversion cost the unbelievably small sum of twenty-four dollars!

Our little library wagon attracted national as well as state-wide attention. It was featured in such publications as **Schools and Better Living**, **Georgia Progress**, and **The Atlanta Journal**. We were asked by the Public Library Division of the Georgia State Department of Education to drive it to the Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville, and put it on exhibit.

For the first time, our people could actually select their books from a collection rather than having to take books prepared in advance and brought in boxes to them. Titles requested — or materials on a needed subject — were prepared and boxed by the library staff however, and tagged for the proper users.

As good library service became possible, we were also pleased that neighboring counties began to want such service also. We Librarians had truly begun to make a mark upon the lives of our people. As a matter of fact, I was so eager after two years of service to assess what had been taking place through the use of the library centers that in FY 1947, I prepared a questionnaire to determine how widespread had been the use of materials throughout the rural communities and what books had been in greatest demand at the service centers over Carroll and Heard Counties. I distributed 1200 copies of the survey and received 800 back. When I reported this to Mrs. Grace Stevenson, Deputy Director, of the American Library Association, she told me the percentage of returns was excellent (66.7%); so I felt the reward justified the effort!

One of the most exciting results of the survey was the proof that in providing libraries in schools I also was reaching into the homes. The survey showed that not only family members were using the books in the School Library Centers but also neighbors were reading them, with an average usage of four to seven readers per book. We also were gaining insight as to what books we should purchase to answer specific needs and to reach our citizens no matter what their age and educational level.

I recall one hot summer Sunday afternoon community meeting at the little schoolhouse located near the center of a settlement. I had agreed to be there with books on community development and during the hour to talk about how various books could be of practical help. Since I was to carry a number of volumes, I decided to go in the little Station Wagon Bookmobile.

Someone had obviously mentioned my pending arrival to someone I shall call "Johnny", for he was waiting for me on the steps outside. Johnny was towheaded, about eight years old, I'd say, with a Tom Sawyer-ish grin. As I drove up, he jumped from the top step to the ground, ran towards the wagon, scaring me almost out of my wits since I nearly hit him. He came around to the driver's side, then scampered along beside the vehicle till I brought it to a stop.

"Hey!" he said, "you ain't gonna take that **George Washington**, are you?" (Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar D', **George Washington**).

"Why, son," I said, "I am not here to take up any books today. Just to attend a meeting. I wouldn't take **George Washington** away, anyhow, if you aren't finished with it."

"Oh, I'm 'thu'; but Granpa, he ain't."

I love this story. You see, **George Washington** is for everybody, not just second and third graders. Johnny read it and Grandpa also enjoyed it.

Picture books were such a novelty to all our library users in those World War II and Post-War Years that I actually had to hide them from high school students so the little children could have them. I never blamed them. Some of the finest artists in the world illustrate children's easy books and there is always enough written content for them to be effective.



## “YONDER SHE COMES!”

In the initial years, as I have said, the Textbook and Library services Division gave us a free hand in developing our library's organization. We were permitted to reach out to bordering counties having no library service or to single county units with few services due to the lack of professional librarians, its small budget, limited space for housing its collection of books. It was never the purpose of the state to destroy any existing county library service. Those county units which had through the years been receiving state aid were permitted to continue to operate provided they met minimum requirements, until the developed systems in the state could absorb them without offending their supporting agencies. This philosophy certainly paid off in Georgia.

With the request for help in Haralson County in the fall of 1946, our area began its first geographic expansion. It was interesting and fun to travel about the country, pinpointing centers of activity, making contact with school leadership, and talking to clubs and organizations. Our reputation had preceded us and I found it easier than ever before to organize and get the public library program underway.

There was not a Public Library in Haralson County. There were fourteen different schools at that time, some of which included both elementary and high schools. No school library had a graduate librarian in this county either. Two of the three largest towns in Haralson even maintained school systems separate from the county system, though one of these later did merge with the county system. There were a number of civic and cultural clubs in addition to PTA organizations — all of which very shortly began to call upon us from time to time for materials for personal use or to present programs. We never turned them down.

Our area now comprised one thousand and seventy-seven square miles. The population was recorded in the 1940 U. S. Census as fifty-seven thousand, one hundred and forty-three.

Naturally our Bookmobile routes had to be changed to accommodate stops in our new area; for example, crossing over from the high service points in Carroll County to the southwestern side of Haralson was more economical than separating the two counties' services. This was beautiful country then with rolling woodsy hills dotted with all kinds of oaks, hickory nuts, pines, dogwoods, and sassafras, miles of sumac bordered the roadside, and far below were

valleys crisscrossed with green pastures or fields under cultivation, with creeks and streams undulating along in the distance and houses set in the woods. Everywhere old fashioned flowers like petunias, salvia, nasturtiums, red hot poker, lantana, tobacco plant (not to be confused with rabbit tobacco which also was prevalent) and the tried and true shrubs such as snowballs and even my beloved lilacs abounded. It was so pretty! It was necessary to gather all the data possible about the county added to the region.

As a result of our study, we placed reading centers at Garrett's Chapel, Smithfield, Poplar Springs, Kansas, Buncombe, and other points west and north near Haralson County, in addition to service to the schools. At Poplar Springs and Smithfield I left books and came away with flowers from Mrs. McKibben's home garden, and candy bars and homemade pickles from Mrs. Smith at her store, where we maintained for years one of our finest, most effective community deposits. I had to meander around considerably on old crisscrossing dirt roads to make all the stops on this scheduled run; but oh how I did love the people in the countryside!

It was at Felton in our added county that we set up the library center in the little Fourth Class Post Office. You remember that poster of Uncle Sam pointing his finger directly at you and saying: "I want you"? Well, it was in that Post Office I always pointed back and said: "Come and get me!"

He finally did, with the admonition to remove the Library from his building. I was asked in by the People but was asked out by Uncle Sam and reluctantly went.

To begin with, I had a flourishing center in Felton in the home of a wonderful person, Gladys Murphy, principal of the Felton School (Mother of Judge Harold and Aunt of Speaker of the House Tom Murphy). Of course at times this proved to be an inconvenience. Adult readers there were not sometimes-users; on the contrary, they were persistent, constant, and very definite about what they wanted.

For years Mrs. Murphy, a teacher, would carry on a summer extended program. We visited there regularly to register the children in Vacation Reading Club, a State-co-sponsored Reading program.

Then one day Mrs. Murphy told us she felt we needed to find a more accessible point of service than her home. After talking with key people in the neighborhood I followed the suggestion that we prepare a reading shelf in the little Post Office. We were made to feel very welcome there, and it was a joy to serve such outgoing, responsive people. We were delighted with this most northern point in our service.

It served the purpose with effectiveness for several years — that is, till we were told by our liaison team at the Post Office that the Government Inspector had seen some patrons checking out books there and suggested, in a forceful manner, that we should cease and desist.

The small neighborhood Library Centers in stores just never did catch on everywhere. Over the years we found this to be true in all five of our counties. Wherever there was a public school in the community, the concept usually found good footing and we had adult reading centers somewhere in most schools. In some counties, the County School Superintendents were eager to house adult reading centers in their offices. This predated Board of Education Buildings, including quarters for the Superintendents, and their offices were usually in the county courthouses. This type of center worked quite well for us, especially in the cases where Instructional Supervisors were employed. Once in a while an exciting result materialized, as did in Haralson County.

I was in and out of the offices of Ernest Goldin, then of Madison Sanders, Superintendents of Schools in Haralson County quite often since we were serving Buchanan, the county seat, regularly, using some of the shelving there in the Superintendent's quarters to house the community collections. Rachel Abney, the very able and lovable educational supervisor, was always my "right arm". Rachel and I worked together, in planning unique programs for children and in keeping needed materials on hand for teachers who were taking night or Saturday courses at West Georgia College or some other nearby institution of higher learning, as well as in pursuing tight summer school schedules. She was fascinated with all our work with school personnel and P.T.A.'s, even our altering the patterns of service yearly to fit the needs that confronted us — public and school.

It was not long after we had acquired the now-famous Ford Station Wagon-on-Wheels that we could hear a chorus of voices greeting us as our Traveling Library came near: "Yonder she comes!! Yonder she comes!!" This glad hello was always a touch of heaven to me, whether the service point was a school or gathering or people waiting at a deposit stop. In the early years at schools, especially after we acquired our little bookmobile, this announcement prompted the stopping of all school classes to check in and to enjoy the browsing experience of selecting books which would remain till the next visit. While this was going on, I always talked with teachers about special needs or projects for the school and the community alike — needs which might be met by mail; or listened to library assistants talking about their problems or the library programs they were preparing, or the books they especially liked. With work out of the way and the time

permitting — I sometimes succumbed to a game of marbles, or to a turn jumping rope, or even to tossing the basketball in the neighborhood of the goal. I was “theirs” that day, that hour, a part of their lives, their routine. “Yonder she comes!” was always the prelude to a happy, happy hour for us all. They learned all the latest library news and I kept up with the events and interests in the locale.

We became friends with children, teachers, parents, and nearby patrons of the school alike. There was a genuine affection, respect, and understanding that developed on both sides. I realized that I was being accepted and identified with the Library-on-Wheels, with the books, the total rural library effort; but I never ceased to be grateful for the many kindnesses which were extended also to me as Edith Foster.

One morning at the College as we went out to the Station Wagon to begin a long day with routes that included Temple and Draketown, I noticed that the right rear tire seemed too low.

“We can make it to the filling station and get some air put in,” I told my assistant, Gladys Wallace. “Let’s delay leaving long enough to see about it as we might have trouble later.”

At the station the manager, who knew me quite well, insisted on taking the tire off for a careful examination rather than just putting in more air. He found a small leak, patched it, put it back on, and we went merrily on to our first stop. It was early afternoon before we arrived at Draketown, where we had a center for the public as well as the school children in the schoolhouse. The youngsters had been looking for us since eleven o’clock and I heard their “Yonder she comes!” as I drove up into the schoolyard. Youngsters began piling out of the school surrounding us and the vehicle. We quickly went to work without explaining the reason for our tardiness.

Pretty soon, as we were helping the sixth grade choose books, three boys came around to me and said,

“Miss Foster, did you know you have a flat tire?”

“Why, no, which one? I just had a tire patched this morning. That’s why we were late,” I answered.

“The right rear. Don’t you worry. We’ll change it and put your spare on. We been waiting for a chance to do something for you. We’re sort o’ glad you have this flat. Now we can help you,” they said, and ran to get the necessary tools. To my surprise and theirs, the spare was flat as a flitter!

The Principal said: "Boys, see which teacher has cold patching and go ahead and put the patch on the tire that was originally on the car" (there had been a second slow leak in the tire which my filling station helper had not noticed)! You see, this dates back to the pre-filling station-on-every-corner day. We were miles out in the rural settlement, and perhaps the nearest help a farmhouse far back from some side road, beyond our vision.

The boys had said, "Don't worry!" Well, I didn't. The teachers had no patching but the Principal casually told four of the boys to get out and hunt some. It took about an hour but they were able to locate the cold patch, returning laughing and teasing. They fixed the flat. I wonder today, whoever and wherever they are, whether or not they recall this experience. I certainly vividly remember with appreciation, not only their working out my Bookmobile problem but also their obvious love of books and library services.

"Yonder she comes!" She has been. She went.

#### 4.

### DOG RIVER AND SUCH

We all were excited and happy in FY 1950 when Robert Griggs, Chairman of the Douglas County Public Library Board, called on behalf of his Board to beg for help.

"Please, just take us into your system," he said. It's too much for us."

We knew the county had started a small library the preceding year without a trained librarian or a bookmobile. Our Board immediately had invited them at that time to consider joining our system; but they were hesitant. This local library unit, sponsored by the Douglas County Business and Professional Woman's Club, as I shall speak of later, was floundering, through no fault of the club nor the library board. They had seen that without an over-all plan for development, a professional librarian to administer all aspects of the library service including technical processes, a bookmobile as a means of serving the people in outlying areas, and a budget equal to the assignment, there was no way to make the idea work successfully.

With approval of the State and Regional authorities, I went over and made a proposal to their board. I agreed to ask for the loan of the State Demonstration Bookmobile (which had been purchased for our State Public Library Division by Georgia's Home Demonstration Clubs)

with its collection of books and to bring it into Douglas County for four months, (beginning in February and taking up the books in May just before schools are out for the summer) and set up proposed library centers serving them all so they could see how our system worked. We had given the order for our first Big Bookmobile which was to be delivered in the summer; hence we could be ready for the expansion. They agreed and we made a strong bid to add the county to West Georgia Regional Library System in the fall of 1951.

This demonstration period and the annexation of Douglas County proved to be one of my most enjoyable personal experiences I had as the Director of West Georgia Regional Library. Ruth Warren of Douglasville acted as one liaison person through this trial period and Annette Winn, the vivacious, capable elementary school Principal at Lithia Springs, as the other.

Ruth was and is one of the most attractive, capable, outgoing people I have ever known with broad concepts, recognizing the great potentials on the local level in being part of a regional library service. She had come to Douglas County High School as Head of the English Department three or four years before this time, had met and married herself a pharmacist. What fun it was to share the beginnings of the library program with her during those months. She could drive that Big Bookmobile as well as I could; hence we took turns. Ruth would also laugh uproarously at my winter garb and my chatter about odd things that had happened to me. We shared picnic lunches and chats along the rural roads both personal and professional, e.g., factors vital to our service effort and characteristics of the next community we were to visit.

The first time we pulled up to the old bridge (now just a memory) over beautiful, crystal-clear Dog River, I was driving. It looked to me almost like a "swinging" bridge. By this time, Ruth knew me so well she could read my mind.

"Think we can make it?" she teased, with a (I must say) rather wicked grin on her face. I got out, went around to the front of the Bookmobile, carefully eyed the width of the vehicle against the width of the bridge, got in, said:

"It'll be close; but I'll bet you a nickel I can do it. If the State folks could only see me now! Well, we may swing a little, if we can squeeze through. You game? Want to get out and walk across before I hit the bridge?"

"Dog River is inviting-looking; but it would be pretty cold to go wading today, I'm sure, and I certainly would hate to see **Huckleberry Finn** floating downstream." Then she laughed like crazy:



“If you can make it, I can.”

Laughing like nuts, we pulled slowly along, trusting that no fast moving little truck or something else would hit the other side of the bridge before we could make it across.

After that harrowing experience we frequently passed over that bridge, lighthearted and full of joy because we shared so many hilarious moments as we lived the life of rural librarians!

Ruth Warren was later to become a key member of the West Georgia Regional Library Board of Trustees, as well as of Douglas County Public Library Board and assisted in numerous expansion proposals — particularly in new buildings and innovative services.

I could not (and did not need to) be in Douglas County every day during the “Trial Period”. The schedule we agreed upon called for periodic visits by me once we had set up the library centers. In between my visits, Ruth parked the State Bookmobile overnight in her backyard. The vehicle was a little the worse for wear and in the bitter cold of February, it proved to be hard to crank and cantankerous. When she got the engine started, she’d let it run awhile to warm up, meanwhile fixing breakfast for her husband, and having dressed and fortified herself with an extra cup of coffee, would drive the vehicle to the downtown area for “show” even when it wasn’t used for deliveries.

The days I was in the County we would work together getting all the books checked in, reshelved and delivered. Once, while her back was to me, she queried:

“Need another layer to keep warm?”

I looked up and she was holding a holey blue sock: “A bookmark”, she injected. You may not believe this, but it is true that another time she came up with a donated strip of bacon obviously also used as a bookmark. (Librarians will not doubt the verity of this statement because patrons invariably use the craziest bookmarks.)

On our initial “get acquainted” visit to Bill Arp School in Douglas County, the Principal called all the children in the first through the eighth grades to the little auditorium to introduce me and let me explain that I would be in their school from time to time with books they could check out.

“Just think,” I said, looking over the crowded room, as I warmed to my subject, “Next year the state is sending us \$10,000 to spend for new books! You will all benefit from this.”

One big boy, I think perhaps about fifteen years old, said right out loud: “Huh, if I had \$10,000 I wouldn’t spend it on no old books!”

Having taught school, I realized that I had been challenged to a sort of duel of philosophies. Were I to falter, I'd lose not just the challenge but also his schoolmates' participation. What to do? I glanced at Ruth, who was looking at me with a great big twinkle in her eye.

"What **would** you do, son," I asked, "if you had \$10,000?"

"I'd build me a battery," he answered quick as a wink.

"How would you like for me to bring you a book that tells you all about building a battery, with pictures and diagrams to show you how?" I asked him in an inspired flash of a reply.

"Could you sho' nuff?" he came right back, not being a bit facetious.

"Yes," I promised. "I am sure it is in the State Library collection. I'll get it for you right away, and it won't cost you a penny." This, mind you, was **before** the county joined the region officially. I carried him a copy of Raymond Yates' **Boy and a Battery** — all without our having to spend a dime of the \$10,000. (I was familiar with the book as we already had copies in the Regional Library collection.)

Douglas County joined the regional system in September, 1951. Douglas County's Business and Professional Woman's Club promptly turned \$2,000 over to us as a contribution towards the purchase price of a fine new bookmobile, which was being built for us by the Gerstenslager Company of Wooster, Ohio.

We had a central branch going in Douglas County, which we would build up over the years as a resource center. The official local board agreed with me at the time that a county library eventually would have to be built. This, it turned out, had to wait until the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) made it possible for the West Georgia Regional Library System Board to apply for a grant on a local matching basis to build the Douglas County Public Library, which was completed in 1967.

Thus seven years following our first pioneering steps to develop a rural library system, we had grown geographically from two to four counties. Again we changed our delivery schedules and broadened our horizons without sacrificing delivery or tarnishing our original purpose.

## BY TRIAL AND ERROR

Lithia Springs offered the greatest challenge to us in our effort to develop Library Centers that served the public. In 1951, when we first worked there, it was a very sophisticated little unincorporated community in the eastern part of Douglas County, bordering on the thriving little town of Austell, (in Cobb County) some ten miles or so from Atlanta. The people had always traded in Austell, because the two communities were so close geographically.

In the middle of downtown Austell's trading center was a small public library located in a vacated store fronting on main street. For years the Cobb County Library Board had been permitting the citizens from Lithia Springs to use this library without any charge. When Douglas County joined the West Georgia Regional Library System in 1951, Sally Smith, the town librarian in Austell and a good friend of mine, tipped me off to the fact that discussions were underway to stop the Lithia Springs citizens' free privilege. Sally said she did not want anyone to be hurt or to get angry. She knew handling this situation would not be easy for me as the people were accustomed to using the Austell library and I had no fine attractive service center to offer or entice our Douglas Countians to stay at home in their own community for library service.

I resolved to present some sort of workable system to the people. For my local mentor and co-worker, I was fortunate in having one of the state's finest teachers and community leaders — Annette Winn, who was then Principal of Lithia Springs Elementary School. (The name of this school was later changed to The Annette Winn Elementary School in honor of this great educator.)

"Edith," Annette admitted as we discussed the problem, "I just don't know how in the world we can get this library tie with Austell broken; but I know it must be done and you will find the way."

"I have thought about it day and night now," I explained one day as I sat in her office. "I need to do an experiment to determine how big the work load will be. Let me bring the big, new Bookmobile over here on an announced schedule, park near the school and check out to registered borrowers directly from the vehicle, since I can find no place of business to use. You can identify the applicants."

We did this for three months and to my surprise, but not to Annette's, we were inundated with business, with demands for more

and more books. The double lines of people waiting to get into the bookmobile extended about a hundred yards. We were physically exhausted and mentally beaten by the time we finished each check-out day in Lithia Springs as it took almost a full day.

I was not discouraged; on the contrary, I was pleased to have this big business but also I had ferreted out the fact that given the opportunity, Lithia Springs would take care of its own reading needs, with eventual financial help from county officials. The Ruritans were interested in the library project, as was the P. T. A.

County financial support for the Lithia Springs Library was not forthcoming immediately; so I was confronted with the need to move very fast to some central point within the community where we could operate without depending on the county tax digest or tying up the bookmobile. We used the bookmobile through the summer but we did not wish to upset the readers when we changed our location in the fall; yet we knew we did not want to have long lines waiting outside the bookmobile in the rain and cold.

Annette said: "We'll just establish the center in my husband's furniture store for a while. It won't cost anything. We'll arrange bookcases for you to use."

I told her that this meant people would have to check out books for themselves. "This is a sprawling community," I reminded her — "probably too large for a successful store service, but we'll give it a try. We will lose a great many books as we do at most store centers. In this case, the need for a change far exceeds that of any loss," I explained; "so we'll try it for a year and then evaluate its success."

A very unexpected development ensued. Young people coming in on school buses had to change buses at Lithia, with a wait of about an hour. They discovered the little center in the furniture store and helped themselves to the books, leaving little or nothing for Lithia Springs readers. Our material was scattered everywhere and we had no way of correcting the situation as it stood.

I was not dismayed, however, because this at least indicated that we needed library services but with adequate facilities. We were already serving in all the schools, as well as helping the small, young branch in Douglasville, which was to become the Douglas County Public Library.

The library at Douglasville was not drawing many Lithia Springs citizens. This was true because the town was very metropolitan in character, though unincorporated and because there was no power structure to utilize in demanding and receiving funding and services.

There was also long-standing, bitter feeling between Lithia Springs and Douglasville; so I was constantly walking a public relations tightrope, wanting only the best for both cities and their respective libraries.

Members of the P. T. A. and the Ruritans and I decided to use a room at the school for our new library center. The Ruritans and P. T. A. members cleaned and painted it, then moved in good shelving, a desk, tables, and chairs. We were successful to a certain extent, till the "newness" wore off, for patrons and volunteers alike. People affiliated with the school system felt at home in the building and went to the community reading center with no hesitancy. So far, so good. I soon realized, though, that we were not picking up any pace. Segments of the community simply would not go to the school to use the public library center.

Annette and I did a survey and came to the conclusion that the center was inadequate. We had to provide a Branch Library to serve all of Lithia Springs. At this point we were happy about the step-by-step effort. Everybody in town was talking about the new library service. The community leaders were ready to approach the county commissioners for financial help with the townspeople solidly behind them. We were shortly to open a branch library with a librarian on duty to provide service.

## 6.

### A PLUS

By the middle of the 1950's, from our viewpoint, serving every school library center was becoming prohibitive. The Bookmobile Staff didn't have time to check selections carefully and was finding that many copies of a title too frequently would be left at a single school, to the disadvantage of the rest of the system. Eventually we would be building a headquarters and branch libraries which would demand considerable time in planning and development. It was imperative that we re-vamp our procedures to make more valuable use of our time.

From the viewpoint of the local school, the direct services from the public library was invaluable; but at the same time, nothing was being done to build permanent school collections.

Centralization of elementary school library materials was the answer. We had built up an excellently balanced Regional Library collection, adequate to serve the public and at the same time, maintain a minimum of a book per pupil in each school.

I felt that this compromise would help us on our way to completing the task and at the same time, going the extra mile in assisting the schools to begin their own quality service. In addition, we placed long-term loans in all schools as though the books were locally owned. We continued this policy of long-term loans over a period of years to answer minimum daily teaching needs until the schools could build balanced collections based on their curricula. I also had lengthy discussions about the whole plan with Lucile Nix and Sarah Jones who concurred wholeheartedly before we took this progressive step, of helping the schools as well as the whole Regional Library program.

In January, 1954, at the first meeting of West Georgia Regional Library Board, I discussed this matter in detail, explaining that for the sake of a healthy development of the whole system as well as for the good of the schools, I should like to set up a Demonstration Elementary School Library. Immediately Madison Sanders, Superintendent of Haralson County Schools, said he wanted that plan put in his county, at Waco.

"I have bond money I can put into it, and the community will support us in the project. If it is all right with the Board, I'll make that a guarantee right now."

All members agreed and gave me the green light to pursue the plan.

We requested and received copies of the Fulton County elementary school library plans which had been devised under the supervision of Virginia McJenkins (supervisor of Fulton County School Libraries), my great friend and co-worker, who had unselfishly placed them in the files of the Division of Texts and Library Services. We made copies of the plans, which gave standard lay-outs of such things as designs of picture book shelving as well as regular juvenile, newspaper and magazine racks, filing and storage cabinets, etc. The result would assure each school of having standard equipment.

I made several preliminary planning trips to the Waco School, which at that time was a combined elementary and high school with a total enrollment of less than two hundred. Madison and his Instructional Supervisor Trainee, Rachel Abney, already experienced on the job but still working on her Master's at the University of Georgia (taking classes Saturdays and during the summer sessions) gave considerable attention to the project. The Faculty, the school youngsters, and the whole settlement of Waco were behind us one hundred percent. The eyes of the region and the Library Division of the State Department of Education, were upon us.



We did several things that made this plan work well from the beginning. The local concerned officials agreed to set aside whatever room we selected. I was to draw up a plan of how it should look when finished and a part of the bond money would be used in the summer to renovate and refurbish the area so that by fall, we could set up the library with the help of faculty, community leaders, and youngsters. We chose a standard sized classroom with a small "junk room" adjacent to it, which would be re-finished as a workroom for the librarian.

Another important factor in its success was the vision and attitude of the Haralson County Board of Education and Superintendent Sanders, who had no qualms about setting aside some of the bond money for the purchase of new books and for adding attractive pieces of equipment, framed prints to adorn the walls, and display materials. Later, when consolidation was in order, I was to discover two Principals with the same fine attitude: Terrell Bailey at Roopville, Carroll County, and Annette Winn, Lithia Springs, Douglas County. After all, why have fine library quarters and no materials to circulate?

Of course inventory of locally owned books had to be made and mending and repairs to be done whenever needed, etc. We decided to set up summer workshops to accomplish this so as not to interfere with school and to use young students whom we had trained to be student assistants. They were capable and interested.

A third most vital point in the great success of the project was the avid interest of Rachel Abney, one of the finest Instructional Supervisors ever to work in the Georgia Educational program. With the permission of Dr. Reba Burnham, a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Supervision in the College of Education at the University of Georgia, Rachel was permitted to take a couple of courses in Library Education, which gave her "a feel" for the school library from an administrative viewpoint. Together with the know-how and understanding gained by working with me and my staff, this particular University training gave her the assurance as well as the skills necessary to move ahead in offering guidance not only in setting up the Waco Demonstration Library but also later on, in helping to get central libraries in all Haralson County Schools. She was a jewel!

As I have said, Rachel and I worked with Waco Faculty in the spring, selecting titles to be ordered before the school year was over. During the final week in August, when Rachel returned to begin preparations for the new school year, we opened boxes, removed books and shelved them temporarily. As agreed, we set up a community library center in one corner of the room, so Waco citizens could have instant access to good books.

Come fall, we were ready to begin our work to set up the entire library. We drew the community into the project by holding evening workshops on processing and arranging materials. I'll never forget one of Waco's happiest participants was the Methodist preacher, who worked away pasting in date-due slips in the books and cracking jokes that kept us all in gales of laughter. He knew more "preacher" jokes than a dog has fleas! The ladies would bring in cool lemonade, sandwiches, and home-baked cookies for us to enjoy. We worked steadily in order to push the plan to fruition.

Rachel was a big help to me in setting up the card catalogs. She had a good understanding of the standard library tools, including H. W. Wilson's **Childrens Catalog** and the **Georgia Library Lists**. Our staff guided Rachel in selecting proper subject headings, while she and others on Madison's Staff and good typing students at Buchanan High School, helped with the typing. Sarah Jones at the State Department stood by to lend expertise whenever we called upon her for help.

The Waco Demonstration Library attracted considerable attention. We held Open House one Sunday afternoon in the spring of 1955, with guests from our area, the University of Georgia, West Georgia College, students from Emory Library School, State Department of Education, Regional Library Trustees, and local residents from all around Haralson, Heard, and Carroll counties. We had a commercial photographer make pictures of the two rooms to be used before anything was done. He also was there to capture the transformation in pictures that eventful Sunday afternoon.

This cooperative effort on the part of a County Board of Education, a University, a Public School, a Community, and a Public Library proved that in rural areas, working together across county lines promotes healthy progress. Sharing made the dollar go further but in addition, it delineated the character and impact of the effort. We also proved our point about the need for school libraries!

Our program was at this point about ready to take the first steps towards centralization of school libraries and glory be! Towards a headquarters building of our own!

## 7.

### A RIP-SNORTING JOB!

In the Summer of 1955, a very significant workshop was held at Emory University, co-sponsored by Emory and the Division of Instructional Materials and Library Services of Georgia Department

of Education and supported by Davison's, the Georgia Library Association, the Gulf Oil Company, Sears, and Mr. Bernard Rothschild. Out of this workshop came two important manuals which were widely distributed over the state. One was **Elementary School Library Materials** and the other, **Elementary Library Assistants**. At the same time the Division of Instructional Materials and Library Services prepared an excellent booklet entitled **Every Elementary School Can Have A Library**. These three booklets came along just at the right time to undergird a philosophy we were convinced was not only sound but necessary — the need to set up School Libraries. Somebody with the know-how had to supply the leadership and the guidance needed. This was to be our privilege in the neck of the woods around Carrollton.

A great contributing factor to our eventual success in promoting this project was the relationship we had with school officials and personnel. We had mutual respect for one another. They knew that we did not believe in change just for the sake of change; and they realized that to enhance their educational program, they needed to be building school library collections. A library plan therefore was to be desired and effected as a progressive measure. The administration could see the building of a permanent book collection, with proper processing and handling. The value of proper selection procedures would become clear as the annual inventory would show how well the library materials were used in the education program. We realized that the teachers would begin to utilize the library in developing their teaching programs. Our regular placements would take care of gaps in the collection and of individual interests and problems. Our "specials" would be built up both in quantity and quality to answer daily or weekly classroom and school needs.

By the fall of 1956 we had been successful in getting a central library set up as a sort of challenge in each of the other three counties at Roopville (Carroll), Ephesus (Heard), and Lithia Springs (Douglas). Three very fine Principals worked with us: Render Caswell at Roopville, J. O. Janney at Ephesus, and Mrs. Annette Winn at Lithia Springs. These projects were something in the nature of "I told you so" jobs. It **could** be done in small, middlesized, and large schools. "This is how is it done and how the school benefits," we said.

In the meantime our staff was constantly having clinics, workshops, and institutes in which teachers were involved and this made me think of how valuable it would be for all concerned if teachers could attend an institute and/or workshop type of learning experience for which credit towards a degree could be given. I talked with Dr. I. S. Ingram at West Georgia College about the possibility of adding

an omnibus course in Library Education as a late afternoon or night class for credit during the school year so the teacher-volunteers could have some sustained and indepth training.

"I like that," he said. "This is needed. I will recommend it to the Board of Regents and if they approve, we will arrange the class for the fall of 1957, provided that you will teach it."

With the OK of the State Department of Education, I had taught English at the college during the first two summers after I returned to Carrollton. At first it had not been burdensome since the schools we serve were closed for the summer. My classes had been in the early morning hours, leaving plenty of time for me to carry out all public library duties. After those two summers, however our service in the area was growing, and the demands on my time increasing so much that I had left I could not continue teaching "on the side".

Now Dr. Ingram was asking me to teach a course in Library Education. I mulled it over and agreed to do it — with the blessing of our State Consultants, since as Director of West Georgia Regional Library, I had a stake in the project.

When I received the official notice that I had been appointed Assistant Professor of Education at West Georgia College, I began making personal contacts with school Administrations and teachers to explain the purpose of the class now added to the College curriculum. Although it would be for all interested students, its real initial purpose was to take the first vital step in the direction of training teachers to become elementary school librarians to help in setting up central libraries. This idea materialized, assuring us of many library oriented and library-minded teachers inspired to work in their own situations to develop central libraries, thus up-grading and enriching the total school programs.

Among the teachers who were in my first Library Education class at West Georgia College was Pearl Abney, wife of the Superintendent of Schools in Paulding County, and another cracker-jack teacher, Bernice Mathews. I found them to be intelligent, out-going individuals with a real desire to become outstanding teachers. Very shortly after the class got underway in the fall of 1957, Pearl became excited about the program of West Georgia Regional Library. She arranged for her husband to come to Carrollton to talk with me and board members about Paulding County's joining our region.

There was a small public library in Dallas, several years old that had been started by the Dallas Woman's Club (nearly all Board members at the time being clubwomen), and housed in the small

clubhouse in downtown Dallas. It purported to be a county library, and people from all over Paulding County could get borrowers' cards; however, there was no method of service outside the building proper. It seemed logical to the Paulding Library Board to join the regional System which could provide a developed library program including regular centers — school and public — set up for service. It was agreeable to all.

Pearl, who would be completing her Library Education course in May, 1958, turned out to be the key figure not only in getting her county declared a legal Branch of West Georgia Regional Library but also in assisting us in getting the county elementary schools to set up central libraries. Along with Bernice Matthews, Pearl smoothed the way for us with individual teachers as well as with Principals. At this time in the service, (1958) we went directly into grade centers in the Paulding County Schools, hoping that Pearl and Bernice could help us during Fiscal 59 to "sell" the central library idea. This hope became a reality and through their interest, our goal was accomplished.

A keen interest in libraries soon developed across all of Paulding County. We set up home and store centers, in the main — mostly neighborhood affairs. In Hiram we opened up to a restaurant, though it served for only two years because the business changed hands and the new owners felt they could not accept the responsibility.

Most of the rural schools in Paulding County as well as in our other four counties, had Adult Reading Centers — each choosing to put it first in the Principal's office, then later, when the school library was centralized to include it as a part of the library itself. As the schools were consolidated in Paulding County, we lost close contact with the small community — a customary situation as the little schools were closed.

We had several strong supporters in Paulding County (other than Pearl and Bernice) when we began the program of centralization in the schools. These people are a part of our success story. I will never forget Mrs. Ira Foster (Judge Foster's wife), Librarian at Dallas High School; Mrs. Vergie Ballantine, a teacher at New Georgia, who subsequently took library science courses to qualify as a teacher librarian; and Mrs. Marian Fleeman, the marvelous Principal at Dallas Elementary School. They helped create the proper climate for this big undertaking, so that Paulding County began the change-over in record time.

As in all five counties, in every situation, the Principal agreed to assign a room (or space) for the library, a teacher was put in charge to work with our staff and with the public assistants. In many cases it

turned out that this teacher had taken the Library Education course at West Georgia College. As we anticipated, later on quite a number of these "volunteers" went on to Graduate School to earn library degrees.

We set up a series of county and regional workshops for these volunteer librarians — sometimes at night but generally on Saturdays, first of all to discuss purpose and objectives, then to teach specific procedures. We were assisted by the high school librarians, nearly all of whom were happy to know that the days of children's feeding into the high schools with no knowledge of the use of libraries would soon be over in our area. We were careful to explain that in centralization, nothing would be taken away; in fact, to show that we were providing a more productive program with their assistance. We promised to leave a long-term loan of books as a nucleus around which we would pull all locally owned books together to build a fine, balanced collection. During this changeover, the State Accreditation Agency allowed the school libraries to claim ownership of the books since we left them there. The grades could still have timely grade centers if they desired, using books selected from the ever-growing central library, with "specials" on loan for them from the West Georgia Regional Library collection; so no classroom collection lost a thing in the centralization process.

Yes, it was a job! That is the reason it required six years for us to assist **every single elementary school in CENTRALIZING**; yet how happy all of the region's School Administrators were, to find their programs "miles" ahead when standards hit the state, requiring elementary school libraries! Many teachers began taking library education. There were mistakes made of course; but we were proud of the cooperative job we did. Indeed our roots are deep in the public school systems in our area. Time nor circumstances can ever change this fact.

## 8.

### The Extra Mile

My final big library effort in working as a part of the College program and in helping to upgrade the elementary School Libraries came in the Sixties, after we had moved out of College quarters into our first tentative building. By the early 1960's, interest had been aroused all over the Southeast about the need to make undergraduate Library Science courses available in colleges qualified to offer them.

Careful study and consideration was devoted to this idea in Georgia, with the Library School at Emory taking a significant role in developing a program for experimentation. Also participating were



Library Instructors from the University of Georgia and Georgia State College for women at Milledgeville, both of which were already recognized as having fine Library Science programs. I was privileged to participate at the time as I was President of the Georgia Library Association.

I must admit, however, that when I learned that only two or three institutions would be permitted to add this under-graduate training program, I was eager to get back to West Georgia College and report to Dr. Ingram so that our own College could possibly be selected as one of the chosen few. He was interested. I made a plea to the study committee members preparing the Guidelines for Teaching Under-graduate Library Science Courses in Georgia Colleges to consider West Georgia College — then primarily a teacher-training institution.

The climate was right. The previous year I had talked frankly with Dr. Ingram that the Library Education class I was teaching had "run its course". The need for TRAINED Elementary School Librarians was becoming desperate. He was always aware of trends in the field; so he knew that standards within the Sixties would require Elementary School Libraries if schools were to attain and maintain accreditation. This would call for librarians, not teacher-volunteers.

"I need to quit teaching the Library Education class this year," I told him. "My load is very heavy. I must turn my attention to building a headquarters and branches for our counties."

"Stay one more year," he said, paying me a great tribute by saying: "I like your philosophy. I will be retiring then as President of the College."

I agreed. He in turn discussed the proposed experiment in the field of undergraduate instruction with Dr. James Boyd, who was to be his successor as President. We had a smooth transition under Dr. Boyd's Presidency from our education course in Library Science as the offering in their new Undergraduate Program to train School Librarians. Dr. Boyd worked assiduously to get this fine program for West Georgia College. He is one of the finest scholars I have ever known. He and Dr. Ingram, in quite different ways, had much to do with shaping my on-the-job philosophy. I am indebted to them both personally and professionally. They recognized both my limitations and my abilities. We worked well together always.

From my viewpoint, I felt I had done the extra mile in service to schools. Beginning with what I had found, I was privileged to make the first move to develop a philosophy, to create a desire, to assist in shaping an added dimension to educational endeavors in elementary schools.

That whole program from the first step on, soon proved to be a valuable one. When standards demanded central school libraries, we had already assisted all our schools in the five counties to accomplish this, giving on-the-spot training, utilizing workshops at our headquarters, teaching the simple rudiments of librarianship in workshops and institutes as well as in the College classes and thereby enabling many of our volunteer teacher-librarians to acquire the technical, organizational, and administrative know-how. So much water has run over the dam in the past thirty-two years, with personnel changes on all levels, that many people have no idea of the hand we at the Regional Library had in the development of elementary school libraries and expansion of high school library programs, and in initiating school library training courses at West Georgia College. Such a story of cooperation has not often been duplicated — if ever.