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BULLETIN

OF THE

RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Vol. 1

February, 1928

No. 2

The Providence Public Library and Its Fiftieth Anniversary

On Saturday, the 4th of February, the Providence Public Library completed fifty years of service to the community and the occasion was appropriately observed.

The Library was first opened to the public in a single room on the second floor of the Butler Exchange, on Feb. 4, 1878, with only a little more than 10,000 volumes.

The experiment of opening under quite modest conditions proved successful, and after two years it was obliged to move to much larger quarters in Snow Street. Here it occupied the entire ground floor of a building about half way between Westminster and Washington Streets, the quarters now occupied by Billings Brothers. In these quarters, which almost at once were found to be too small, it remained from 1880 until 1900, in which year the present building was occupied. With its expanding volume of work, the present quarters have proved too contracted; and the needed extension on Empire Street is long overdue. Fortunately, the Library owns the entire block, and the need, (which, however, is a most urgent need), for adequate funds for erecting the extension, is all that prevents supplying this relief.

The anniversary exercises took place in the Elks Auditorium on Saturday evening, Feb. 4, with Professor Henry B. Gardner, the president of the trustees, presiding. Addresses were delivered by the Mayor, Mr. Foster, the Librarian, and Mr. George H. Locke, the Librarian of the Toronto Public Library, who spoke on the subject, "How Necessary Is a Public Library?"

Immediately following these exercises, there was a reception in the Library building itself, close by, at which opportunity was given for examining the Exhibits showing the growth and development of the Library during these first fifty years.

These interesting exhibits will be open to the public generally until February 18th.

Dedication of the William H. Hall Free Library, Edgewood, Rhode Island

The William H. Hall Free Library of Edgewood, Rhode Island, celebrated Armistice Day by dedicating its new building.

No tickets of admission were issued but a general invitation to the public was given. About three hundred people crowded into the assembly hall while as many more inspected the building. On the platform were seats for the thirty-six trustees and those assisting in the program. Judge Chester W. Barrows, President of the Board of Trustees, presided. Rev. Michael J. McCabe gave the invocation.

Commander Wooley of the Richard J. Dennis Post, presented illuminated resolutions of its appreciation of favors received from the library and a check for fifty dollars, the same to be given annually for ten years to purchase books "in memory of the men of Edgewood and Pawtuxet who gave their lives in the World War." A gift of handsome United States and State flags was presented from the Edgewood Civic Club by the president, Mrs. William H. Sykes.

Dr. Harry Lyman Koopman gave the address of the evening. In closing he said, "President John Quincy Adams called astronomical observatories 'lighthouses of the mind.' We may call the libraries of America lighthouses of public opinion, which by their illumination, make effective that vigilance which is the price of Liberty."

Judge Barrows said, "We have invited you here to inspect the facilities which the generosity of William H. Hall has provided for the enlargement of the intellectual, artistic and social life of many who were his neighbors and of many who will constitute the citizens of Edgewood for half a century to come. . . . Our sole desire is to serve the people of Edgewood in every cultural way."

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RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Published every now and then, and designed to be of interest to librarians of Rhode Island.

R. I. L. A. Bulletin Committee

Sallie E. Coy

Westerly Public Library

May V. Crenshaw

People's Library, Newport

Josephine A. Hope

Providence Public Library

Vol. 1 February 1928 No. 2

Song Contest

It has been suggested that the R. I. L. A. should have a song, something suitable for singing at Regional Meetings and other library gatherings. Here is an opportunity for all would-be poet laureates.

Songs may be submitted to any member of the Library Bulletin Committee before April 1st and the best song will be printed in the next issue of the Bulletin.

The songs should consist of two or three stanzas set to a familiar tune, and it is suggested that the words be of a humorous rather than a sentimental nature.

Report of the Committee on Relations with the State Board of Education

The Committee had a conference on November 30, 1927, with the Library Committee of the State Board of Education in the office of the Commissioner. The program approved by the Library Association in 1926 was discussed. Certain features were emphasized, such as additional educational work with foreigners, supervision of existing libraries, institutes and summer library schools.

The possibility of securing additional funds was also canvassed, but without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion.

Important Dates Ahead

The spring meeting of the R. I. L. A. is to be held in the William H. Hall Free Library, Friday, April 27th. This is not only the annual meeting of the Association but several important items of business will be up for discussion at this time. The program, too, is sure to be interesting, so it is hoped that as many as possible will plan to attend. The New England Regional Conference will probably be held in Portland, Maine, the last week in June.

Another Handsome Library Building for Rhode Island

Ivory-colored walls, rich, dark-blue hangings at the high windows, where there are inviting blue-cushioned window seats, low tables of dark wood, particularly the handsome round ones in the center of each wing, and a little dash of brightness added by the red candles on top of some of the small cases, together with an air of cosy hospitality that is not in the least detracted from by the newness and up-to-dateness of the building; these are some of the pleasant impressions that greet the visitor to the new William H. Hall Library in Edgewood. The children's wing, on the left hand side of the charging desk, which faces the entrance, is the last word in low tables and chairs, and low bookcases and catalogues. The reading room, on the right, is flanked by inviting alcoves furnished with tables and chairs. Perhaps the one that leaves the most attractive impression on the mind of the visitor is the one labelled "browsing."

The office of the librarian is a joy. Windows looking out on the south and west let in the last rays of the afternoon sun, and a long shelf on the inside wall holds several luxuriant plants. This wall, glass from midway to the ceiling, gives an atmosphere of lightness and openness to the room.

But, on the floor below, the biggest treat awaits, the children's story room. It is a square room, with the same ivory-colored walls, and window hangings and window seats as above. The windows are on either side at the front of the room, and between them is an attractive mantel with a fire grate. On the back wall is a magnificent elk's head. The room is equipped with low bookcases along the walls, rows of folding chairs and a fine victrola. Other features of this lower floor are a cosy rest room and a snow-white, up-to-the-minute kitchenette for the staff, and a fine auditorium, to which is added a homely touch by the handsome tall clock in the corner. This hall has already proved its usefulness in the community, for the Edgewood Grammar School has recently held its graduation exercises there.

As the visitor leaves the library, especially if it happens to be at night, he should look back at the imposing approach. Enough of the lighted blue ceiling of the porch may be seen through the archways to give a gleaming whiteness to the facade of the building, an effect that reminds one very much of the whiteness of a Greek temple.

A New Handbook

The Handbook of the R. I. L. A. published in 1922 is obviously out-of-date. At the fall meeting of the Association it was decided to refer the question of a new edition to the Executive Board. The Board voted to publish a new edition provided the cost of printing—about \$80 for 500 copies—could be obtained from the libraries or the state, as the budget of the Association is too small to take care of the extra expense.

The trustees of the Westerly Public Library have agreed to subscribe \$25 from the library's funds if other libraries will make up the difference. The trustees of the William H. Hall Free Library have voted \$10. What will your library do to help? Amounts large or small will be welcomed. Please send your check (or, if that is not possible, your pledge) to the President or to the Treasurer, before March 1st.

Miss Alice W. Morse of Edge-wood, will act as chairman of the Handbook Committee, and it is hoped that the new Handbook will be ready to distribute at the annual meeting in April.

Enlistment Campaign

The Membership Committee of the R. I. L. A., Sara E. Sherman, Chairman, Gertrude Brown, Florence Ferguson, Gertrude Forrester and Ralph McNay, is still trying to enlist new members for the Association. This committee sent out letters to 81 public and special libraries and 23 High School libraries of the state, making a total of 104 libraries. As a result, they were able at the October meeting to report 51 new members of the Association.

The libraries reporting 100 per cent membership of staff were: William H. Hall Free Library, Providence Public Library, Westerly Public Library, John Hay Library, R. I. College of Education Library, Elmwood Public Library, and since that time, People's Library, Newport, also reports 100 per cent membership. This report does not include the small libraries with one librarian, although there are many of these who are members of the Association.

H. C. of L.

Since its organization 25 years ago, the dues of the Association has been 50 cents a year. It has grown increasingly difficult to carry on the work of the R. I. L. A. on so small a budget, and to attempt new ventures such as a printed Bulletin. This was discussed at the fall meeting and referred to the executive board. The executive board recommends that dues be raised to 75 cents a year. This will be voted upon at the spring meeting.

A Word to the Wise

The membership committee reports that the names of 45 members whose dues have not been paid for 3 years or more are to be dropped from the Association according to the provision in the constitution. To be represented in the new official Handbook is one of the advantages of paying your dues before March 15 after which date the names of all delinquent members will be dropped from the Association's list.

If the smallness of dues is a cause for procrastination, two suggestions are made: 1. The treasurer will be glad to receive a check for two years in advance; 2. Make one member of the staff responsible for collecting and sending in all dues.

Why have any names dropped? Let's all send our dues to the Treasurer, Miss Gertrude E. Brown of the Providence Public Library, before March 15th, and see our names in the Handbook.

Cash Up, Please!

A play in three acts.

Act I. The hero and heroine place their hands in pocket and bag respectively.

Act II. They remove said hands with coins tightly clasped therein.

Act III. They deposit said coins with R. I. L. A. Treasurer.

N. B. Time may be allowed for curtain calls.

The 1927 annual report of the People's Library, Newport, shows that its centrally located Washington Square Branch, with its collection of some 2,500 books, had a circulation of 40,760 as against 46,844 at the Main Library in Aquidneck Park, with its collection of some 35,000.

This is one more striking proof of the wisdom of putting books where they can be easily reached.

Who's It, and Why!

Miss Margaret Bingham Stillwell, curator and librarian of the Annmary Brown Memorial of Providence, gave six interesting and important lectures on incunabula and Americana at the Columbia University School of Library Service December 7-14.

Miss Margaret Reid, children's librarian at the Elmwood Public Library, has been appointed State Chairman for R. I., of the Section of A. L. A. Children's Librarians, to enlist new members for the children's section of the A. L. A.

On the evening of February 9th, representatives from the five public libraries of Cranston and libraries of the two High Schools met at the William H. Hall Free Library. Trustees, librarians and all interested in the work of the libraries were invited. Mr. Fenner, Superintendent of Schools, also Mrs. Besharian, teacher of Americanization met with them. It was hoped in this way that a better understanding of each other's needs might be reached.

The Providence Athenaeum had an exhibit in the lobby of the R. I. Hospital Trust Company's banking room for one week, November 19-25. Pictures of the library were shown, a few of the old books including a charging book in use a hundred years ago, and some of the latest additions for children and grown-ups.

The Brown University Library has recently issued Reading Lists 7 and 8, as part of a series called Intellectual Adventures for College Students. No. 7 lists books on Evolution, Eugenics and Anthropology, and No. 8, those on Philosophy and Ethics. The titles were selected by Mr. F. K. W. Drury, Assistant Librarian, with the co-operation of various members of the Faculty of Brown University.

Mrs. Margaret W. Powers of Boston, who conducts the children's story-hour at the Athenaeum on Saturday mornings, has found for the library some bright colored Polish posters depicting the life of the people, and a tiny Sicilian cart decorated with scenes from the story of Roland. These are of use in connection with her stories.

Mr. George Hinckley, who recently resigned as librarian at the Redwood Library is at Northampton, Mass. Mr. Hinckley was a former president of the R. I. L. A. and always loyally supported it in all of its activities.

Miss Frances Hubbert, who was recently appointed Librarian of the Redwood Library, Newport, began her library work under the guidance of Miss Isom in Portland, Oregon, later graduating in the class of 1919 at Pratt Institute Library School, and serving four years in the New York Public Library. She came to the Redwood Library from a position in the Robbins Library, Arlington, Mass., where she had been associate librarian and later librarian.

In answer to a letter from Miss Adele C. Martin, President of the R. I. L. A. offering aid from R. I. Libraries, Miss Mildred C. Cook, Secretary of the Free Public Library Department of the Vermont State Board of Education, writes as follows:

"I am not certain that an appeal should be made to your libraries in general just now. The Massachusetts libraries have been appealed to, and this may result in a large contribution. A few individual libraries in your state have already offered help, and I understood that a newspaper in Providence carried an appeal. Perhaps this will bring us in a sufficient number of contributions. All those we have had so far have been very helpful indeed and we appreciate them."

By the will of Miss Mary Bradford Child, who died December 24, 1927, \$2,000, is left to the Providence Athenaeum as a fund, the income to be used for the purchase of books.

Busy Days at Elmwood

The lectures and entertainments held each month in the Elmwood Public Library Auditorium continue to be as pleasurable and well attended as ever. So far there has been a Pathe moving picture on Alaska and a lecture on "Interesting Places and Peoples" by a veteran traveller, Col. H. Anthony Dyer. On February 28, there will be a talk by the popular book reviewer of the Providence Journal, Mr. Bertram K. Hart (BKH) who will give a comprehensive talk on books. Mrs. Lucy Marsh Gordon will sing.

This year, Elmwood has commenced a new feature of its work by holding regular book review talks in the Auditorium on Friday afternoons once a month. Well known book reviewers in the city are invited to review current books of biography, fiction, poetry and travel. These meetings are well attended and have proved useful and stimulating to the readers.