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5-1939

Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 11, no. 2

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RILA, "Bulletin of the Rhode Island Library Association v. 11, no. 2" (1939). *RILA Bulletin*. Book 11.
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BULLETIN

OF THE

RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOL. 11

MAY 1939

NO. 2



PROGRAM

SPRING MEETING OF THE RHODE ISLAND LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 1939
WESTERLY PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERLY, R. I.

MORNING SESSION

- 10:00 Greetings
James M. Pendleton, Trustee, Westerly Public Library
Business Meeting
Reports of Committees
Election of Officers
- 10:45 Discovering Rhode Island Dialects
Dr. Rachel Harris Kilpatrick
- 12:30 Panel Discussion: Adult Education
Miss Ruth Miller, presiding
- 1:00 Luncheon

AFTERNOON SESSION

- 2:15 Problems of City Life, 1660-1740
Dr. Carl Bridenbaugh
- 3:15 Americans in Poetry
Leonard Bacon

BULLETIN
of the
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

Edith R. Blanchard

Brown University Library

Mildred Bradbury

Providence Public Library

Barbara Hubbard

Providence Athenaeum

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WESTERLY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The library movement in Westerly was a very early one. The first public library in the Colony of Rhode Island was established in Newport in 1700, and the second collection of books designed for public use was established in 1717 in Westerly as the result of a bequest by a Newport clergyman, Rev. William Gibson. The books were put into the hands of the town clerk of Westerly "to be loaned at his discretion to such brethren as might desire the use of them."

From 1717 to 1891 the library movement in the Town had its ups and downs, but very few years elapsed even during the most depressing stages without some attempt being made to revive and renew an interest in its affairs. The Pawcatuck Library Company, the first well organized group, was incorporated in 1797, one of the earliest of the so-called "social libraries" in the State.

In 1848, Henry Barnard, at that time School Commissioner of Rhode Island, personally selected and purchased 2,050 volumes for the Library, using for this purpose the then enormous sum of \$1100 which was entrusted to him by the Library Committee.

It is doubtful if a wiser choice of purchaser could have been made. Mr. Barnard who later became first Commissioner of Education of the United States was a man of vision and a pioneer in the idea of popular education. A number of the books he selected, still bearing the old book-plate of the Pawcatuck Library Company may be found on the shelves of the Westerly Library today.

As the years passed the Directors of the Library realized that a library free to all the townspeople would have greater usefulness than one limited to subscribers only. Again and again they offered the Library to the Town, but no definite action was taken. At last in 1891, the Town seemed ready to take over the responsibility.

At the same time a strong sentiment was abroad for the erection of a Civil War monument in the center of the town. Just at this time, Stephen Wilcox, president and founder of the Babcock & Wilcox Co., and a native of Westerly, proposed the erection of a Memorial Building, one that would contain a public library, rooms for the Posts of the Grand Army as long as needed, and other features that would make it a real community center. He offered the land and a substantial sum of money with the proviso that a similar amount be raised by the people of the town. Thus the structure was laid for the present Library system of Westerly.

Under the direction of Mr. Wilcox the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly was incorporated in 1891 to administer the Library and Park. James M. Pendleton, President of the Association today, is the only living member of the original Board of Trustees. Though all of the service of the Library is entirely free to the

public, its administration is still in the hands of a private corporation, and the Town has not yet had to assume responsibility for the Library it hesitated to accept so many which years ago.

TO REACH WESTERLY

The most direct route from Providence is Route 3. Those desiring to return by a different route will find themselves well on the way to either Route 1 or 2, if they join the group making a tour of the beaches at the conclusion of the afternoon session.

The morning bus leaves Providence at 9:15, arriving in Westerly at 10:45. For return trip leave Westerly at 3 p. m. Single fare 75c. Round trip 1.35. Return ticket need not necessarily be used day of purchase.

Train leaves Providence at 8:38 arriving in Westerly at 9:23. Afternoon trains leave Westerly for Providence at 3:08, 4:31 and 6:07. All schedules listed daylight saving time. Railroad fare \$1.11, no special rate for round trip.

Luncheon Arrangements

Luncheon will be served by the women of Calvary Baptist Church at 75c. The church is located on Elm St. about five minutes walk from the Library. Those desiring luncheon must make advance reservations.

Tour of the Beaches

After the meeting automobiles will be provided for those desiring transportation for a tour of the beaches. To those who have not seen the devastation wrought by the hurricane, and the re-building program already well under way, this will prove an interesting finale to the day's program. Advance reservations must be made by those desiring transportation.

OUR SPEAKERS

The Rhode Island Library Association is fortunate in having among its speakers for May 23rd one of the State's most distinguished literary representatives.

Leonard Bacon, tho born fifty years ago in New York State, is by descent, tradition, and boyhood education a Rhode Islander. The family estate at Peace Dale is his present home.

For about twenty-five years now he has been writing poetry. His books have unusual titles, -- *Ulug Beg*, *Animula Vagula*, *Legend of Quincibald*, *Guinea Fowl*, *Goose on the Capital*, etc., and he himself is as unusual when compared with the once popular conception of what a poet should be. His style is not lyric, nor musical, nor soothing, but virile, full of nervous fire, and often caustic. His shafts of satire have pierced more than one armour of convention.

This year he has published his autobiography entitled *Semi-Centennial*. It is an interesting story of an active, varied, eventful life lived always with enthusiasm and zest.

Dr. Carl Bridenbaugh, who is one of the speakers at the afternoon session of the spring meeting of the Rhode Island Library Association, is a member of the faculty of Brown University which he joined in 1938.

He is a graduate of Dartmouth and received his degree of Ph. D. from Harvard University. For several years he was a professor of history at Massachusetts Institute of Technology before coming to Brown.

He has recently published a book entitled "*Cities in the Wilderness; the first century of urban life in America.*"

Besides being an interesting book, entertaining because of its pungent quotations from contemporary chron-

icles, it is also a very sound piece of scholarship and a distinct contribution to the literature of the period.

Dr. Rachel Harris Kilpatrick is a graduate of Pembroke College. She received her master's degree at Radcliffe College in 1930, and her doctor's degree from Brown in 1937. From 1931-1933 she was a field worker on the staff of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada, work under Dr. Jans Kurath, Director of the Atlas. She had previously prepared for this work by special study in Phonetics at Columbia University.

Her travels up and down the State, bringing her into friendly contacts with people of every type, not only furnished her with material for her doctor's thesis, *The Speech of Rhode Island*, but provided as well many interesting and amusing insights into human nature.

LIBRARY NEWS

The new extension of the Brown University Library proceeds amid much dust, noise and some confusion. The brick walls are practically completed and work is going forward on roofs and floors. It is hoped the building will be ready for occupancy early in the next college year.

Through the kindness of Mr. Stephen Willis, Manager of the Cherry and Webb Station of the Columbia Broadcasting Company, the Elmwood Public Library has been "on the air" since February in a series of "squibs" describing important books which are known as "*News of the Book World*." This service is described in the *Library Journal* for April 15, page 290, entitled "*Response to Dr. Bostwick*."

The librarian of the Elmwood Lib-

rary would be glad to know the pulse of circulation in other R. I. libraries, whether it is slow or fast. The pulse of the Elmwood Library was fast from the first of the year 1938 until September, having gained a total of 18,000. But since the Hurricane Month of September, circulation has been losing practically every month, making a total net gain for the year of only 9,765 for adult reading.

The loss in Juvenile circulation is not as considerable as the newspapers reported, having lost for the year only 1,648. It is true, however, that both teachers and children are using the Juvenile department less than formerly, although the attendance at Story Hour is the highest we have ever had. For April, the total attendance was 441 making a total average attendance for the five Saturday mornings of 88.

The Valley Falls Free Library has been recently redecorated. Desk, tables and other furniture have been refinished and the general appearance of the Library much improved.

The Watchemoket Public Library, East Providence, is now housed in a new building on Grove Avenue, and the name has been changed to Weaver Memorial Library. The library is open each day in the week with the exception of Sunday.

EXHIBITIONS

The Providence Public Library is showing during May the work of a Providence author, Maribelle Cormack, head of the Children's Department of the Roger Williams Park Museum, whose newest books are "*Ruth and Marcia, Woodsmen*" and "*Land for My Sons*." Her "*Jacques the Goatherd*" has just been translated

into Polish. The exhibit includes many authentic objects.

Roger Williams Park Museum

For the next two months a whaling exhibit, including log books, is being shown at the Roger Williams Park Museum. In July the Nature Summer School for children will be held again.

STATE AID TO FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The omission of the appropriation for State aid to free public libraries in the State Appropriation Bill for the fiscal year ending June, 1940, has been a matter of deepest concern to all of the librarians in Rhode Island, and particularly to your Committee on Relations with the State.

At the suggestion of the Committee on Relations with the State I asked all of you in my letter of March 13th to protest against the elimination of all funds for the free public libraries. I also requested a hearing of the Chairman of the House Finance Committee. The response to my request was most reassuring, and I take this opportunity to thank you and your trustees on behalf of the Committee on Relations with the State for your timely cooperation. While it is impossible to predict the final results,

your protests sufficiently impressed the legislators so that they have reinstated the \$11,000 for books for free public libraries in the appropriation bill. This has now passed both houses and awaits the Governor's approval.

Since State aid to free public libraries is such a vital question, it seems fitting at this time to give a brief review of its development in Rhode Island.*

The first State aid to free public libraries in Rhode Island was made in 1875 when the General Assembly passed a law appropriating \$550 for the purchase of books. Seven libraries, East Greenwich, Jamestown, Manville, Middletown, Narragansett, Old Warwick, and Warren, applied for and received aid. Within twenty-five years (1900) forty-nine libraries were receiving State aid, and the appropriation for new books was \$6,678.75. Now, sixty-four years later, seventy libraries receive State aid, and the appropriation for new books is (or rather was) \$11,000. The following table gives an interesting picture of the development of free public libraries in Rhode Island, and the part played by the State in supporting their book collections.

Year	No. libraries receiving State aid	Amount appropriated by State
1875	7	\$ 550.00
1880	18	1,702.00
1880	37	4,300.00
1900	49	6,678.75
1910	56	8,500.00
1920	63	10,000.00
1930	68	11,000.00
1939	70	11,000.00

To the Hon. George W. Greene of East Greenwich belongs the credit of first introducing and successfully carrying out the plan for State subsidies to free public libraries in Rhode Island, and it is interesting and enlightening to read in the report of the State Board of Education for 1900 the paragraphs explaining his motives. Professor Greene was a student and a great reader and anxious to bring good books within the reach of everyone. However, besides being a scholar and a public spirited citizen, Professor Greene must have been a practical individual. He had seen more than two score libraries in various sections of the State started and maintained entirely by private effort. As long as the original donor or group of donors supported them, these libraries flourished; but with no sure means for the acquisition of new books and with the passage of years many of these libraries disappeared or housed obsolete collections. It was with the picture of these libraries in mind that Professor Greene urged the legislature to appropriate funds that would be restricted to the purchase of books.

The first impetus for free traveling libraries was given by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island when in 1899 the Society at its own expense contributed twenty-five volumes to be used for this purpose.

The Rhode Island Federation of Women's Clubs and other organizations became active in this work, and in 1907 the General Assembly made its first appropriation of \$1,000 to aid traveling libraries. This developed into a \$3,000 appropriation for library Extension Service.

The necessity of funds for purpos-

es other than the purchase of books accounts for the following paragraph in the Board of Education's Report for 1890: "It is not enough to bring a few hundred books together and say, 'this is a library' and expect that henceforth it will run itself. At first curiosity will serve to attract, but unless there is some positive effort to make the library meet the wants of the people, and in turn some wise skillful endeavor to bring people in contact with the best there is in the library, it will not thrive."

This sentiment was re-iterated for thirty years until in 1921 the General Assembly passed an act appropriating \$3,000 to augment the salaries of the librarians in the small free public libraries who were not receiving more than \$500 annually from any other source of income. Forty-nine librarians now receive State aid for salaries. The largest single amount given for this purpose is \$145.60, and the lowest single amount is \$14.56.

The present distribution of the \$11,000 for the purchase of books is, according to a report of the State Librarian as follows:

35 libraries receive	\$180
8 libraries receive	179
14 libraries receive	136
1 library receives	155
8 libraries receive	113
1 library receives	100
2 libraries receive	90
1 library receives	45

This account is but a brief resume of the history of the development of State aid to libraries. In the reports of the Board of Education one finds discussed many problems which are pertinent today - certification and the value of trained advisers to assist the librarians working in the

smaller libraries to mention only two of them.

The record of our predecessors is one of progress - slow perhaps at times - but nevertheless definitely achieving higher goals. May our records show equal accomplishments.

Norman L. Kilpatrick, *President*

*Facts and figures are drawn from three sources: the *Reports of the State Board of Education*, the *Library Bulletin* issued by the Department of Education with the cooperation of the Rhode Island Library Association, and the State Librarian, Miss Grace M. Sherwood.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

At its meeting in December, 1938, the American Library Association Council granted the petition of the Rhode Island Library Association to become a chapter of the American Library Association.

Mr. Francis P. Allen, Librarian of the Rhode Island State College Library, has been appointed to represent the Rhode Island Association at the Council meeting at the California Conference this year.

The following members of the Rhode Island Library Association have been appointed to membership of Committees of the American Library Association: Grace M. Sherwood, Librarian of the State Library, is a member of the Committee of Friends of Libraries and of the Committee on Legislation; Aimee F. Draper of the Providence Public Library is a member of the Membership Committee.

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND

The President of the Rhode Island Library Association has received a letter from Mrs. Herbert

E. Walter, Chairman of Education of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, in regard to the latter's traveling libraries. She wishes Rhode Island librarians to understand that the traveling libraries of the Society are available to any Rhode Island library which wishes to supplement its books on nature study. A traveling library consists of twenty books packed in a case, and it may be loaned for from two to four weeks.

A collection of over 800 carefully selected books on all subjects relating to gardens, trees, birds, etc., and suitable for either adult or juvenile readers, is available for such use. The books are housed at Roger Williams Park Museum in charge of Miss Maribelle Cormack, to whom all applications should be made.

No fee is charged for the loan of a library, but the borrower is expected to call for it and return it in good condition.

The Audubon Society is also glad to set up small exhibits and to provide traveling lectures illustrated with slides.

For the latter a fee of \$2.50 is charged, or \$5.00 if a lecturer is sent.

Program of the Regional Conference of New England Librarians Wentworth-by-the-Sea,

Portsmouth, N. H., June 19-22, 1922

Speakers: Robert Tristram Coffin; President Engelhardt, University of New Hampshire; Gladys Hasty Carroll; Dale Warren; Prof. J. Duane Squires; John Hooper; Anne Carroll Moore; Archibald G. Ogden and others, including several librarians.

Topics: "Propaganda vs. Truth"; "The Library in the Junior College"; "Ireland - A Publisher's Holiday"; "Library Broadcast-

ing: Entertainment, Publicity or
Make reservation with hotel.
What?"; "Three Hundred Years
of Printing in New England";
"Gadgets for Libraries", and
others.

Round Table Discussions: Branch
Libraries; Children; Village Li-
braries; Cataloging; Adult Edu-
cation; College and Reference;
Hospital Libraries; Friends of

Libraries.

Other Features: "Information,
Please! A Library Quiz"; "For
This Week Only; A Library
Sketch", etc.

Registration fee \$1.00; for one
day attendance 50 cents.

Hotel rates (room and meals);
Room for two, \$6.00 per person
per day; Single room, \$7.00.