

The Baldwin Librarian

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 Lucille George, Circulation Chief,
 B. A. Summer session, University of Michigan, Dept. of Library Science.
 Hester Giles, Circulation Assistant,
 Student at Wayne University.
 Richard Gibbons, Evening Assistant,
 Student at Wayne University.

PUBLIC INVITED TO OPEN HOUSE

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 it seemed impossible to make very material additions, but during the past two years we have been able to add nearly 4000 books, bringing the total to 17,000.

Each member of the Library Board has accepted the position with a feeling of responsibility to the community, and has given gladly of time and interest to serve you here. When the new building was first used, the original board consisted of Mrs. Retta Barr, Mrs. Alice Hartwell, Mrs. Iva Marlotte, Clarence Vliet, John B. Howarth, and Earl G. Potter. During the following three years, members included Russell Gore, Charles Crandell, Mrs. Barbara Pyle, Mrs. Mary Wallman, Mrs. Helena Thomas, Mrs. Florence Cushing. The present board is composed of Mrs. Florence White, Mrs. Alene Wood, John B. Howarth, Secretary, Charles E. Lewis, Vice-President, Howard Crull, Treasurer, and myself. The senior woman member is president of the Board. The Superintendent of Schools has customarily been elected a member of the Board in order that the unusually close relationship between the Library and the Birmingham Schools may best be sustained.

We feel that during the past ten years we have been very fortunate in having as librarians two such outstanding women as Mrs. Nancy Thomas, who was with us from 1927 to 1934, and Miss Adeline Cooke, who came to her Birmingham position from Santa Monica, California, in 1934. Both are women of unusually high character and qualifications, each has made for herself an established place in the life of the community, quite aside from her professional work. Under the direction of both Mrs. Thomas and Miss Cooke the work has proceeded smoothly and efficiently, there has been a fine cooperation with the Board in every way, both in good times and bad, the assistants have been selected and trained in the special requirements needed in the Baldwin Library, and the service to the public has been of a high quality.

While Mrs. Thomas was librarian her assistants were Mrs. Maureen Waldrip, Miss Ruth Phelps, Miss Gertrude Melody, Miss Alice Hagelshaw, Miss Henrietta Lamet, and Miss Margaret Hurston. The last two of these remained some time after Miss Cooke's arrival, and were followed by Miss Helen Norman, and the present members of the staff, Miss Ruth Poucher, Miss Lucille George, Miss Lido Moore, and Miss Hester Giles.

OUTDOOR SIGN TO DIRECT PATRONS
 A large sign of decorative iron work has been made for the library by the Works Progress Administration, executed by Walter Heide of Detroit. Besides being an adornment to the grounds, it will direct those who are not sure which of the very similar buildings is the Library and which is the Municipal Building.

LIBRARY, POLICE SHARED QUARTERS

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 grounds which being located on one of the village's busiest corners had acquired a high value for commercial purposes, and in connection with the Library Board and the University of Michigan a friendly suit in the County Circuit Court was instituted to determine what provision the village should make for the library for its surrender of its rights in the old property. The court's decision ordered the village to surrender the block it had recently acquired, as above mentioned, for locating a new library building. The village commission then took steps to acquire the two blocks just east of the one surrendered, to make a Civic Center, a project that aroused opposition on the part of some who were lacking in vision. Fortunately for our community which is now a fast growing city of some twelve thousand people, the three men who formed the village commission, named before, persisted in their plan which has resulted in Birmingham being known far and wide as possessing an unusually attractive Civic Center, unequalled by any community similarly situated.

The sale of the old property having been consummated, the library board on June 14, 1926, adopted plans for a new library building to cost not exceeding \$150,000 with furnishings \$25,000, and on June 21 the plans were confirmed by the village commissioners and on request of village president, Charles J. Shain, the library board united with them to propose bonding the village for funds to complete the purchase of the property, erect a library building and a municipal building, in connection with which a separate fire department and a police department should be housed.

The old English type of building of solid brick with heavy slate roof was adopted by the library board and afterwards the same architects designed our present Municipal Building to harmonize. The block between the two buildings was afterwards landscaped as a park, which is now a beauty spot admired by all.

On April 16, 1927, following the clearing of the library site of the buildings then occupying it, the cornerstone of the new building was laid at 3 o'clock with appropriate ceremonies. Mrs. Retta M. Barr, the then President of the Library Board, being in charge. On December 17, 1927, the opening ceremonies in the new building took place. The building was accepted on behalf of the village by Mr. Harold T. Ellerby then village president and two days later at 10 A. M. the library was opened for use.

Chaucer's Tale Comes To Life

Of unusual interest to the classes in English literature is the set of figures of the Canterbury pilgrims headed by Chaucer himself. Beautifully drawn, hand-colored and mounted on wood, they represent the Knight riding sedately, the Squire on his prancing horse, the Parson in a scarlet robe with his hands folded piously across his breast, the Cook looking rosy and well fed, and all the others, 29 in the caravan. The figures were brought from a shop in Oxford, England, and it is a treat to be able to study and enjoy them.

Novel Brings Romance

The historical novel fills a place in the affection of the man or woman who loves the flavor of other times and people. To the school boy and girl it is a boon, as educators and teachers have discovered. It is all very well reading in some dull historical

J. B. Howarth Holds Office On Library Board For 13 Years



MR. HOWARTH

PLAN PROVIDES NEWEST FICTION
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 tence the rental collection has been taken in \$2053.24 and 1200 books have been purchased, 1071 of which have already been transferred to the library shelves. Since no book budget has ever been adequate for the ideals set, it is a satisfaction to find some method of relieving at least a part of the load.

With the rental collection in operation the current fiction is cared for, and well cared for, and the book funds can be devoted to children's books, reference works and adult non-fiction. Perhaps also, there is a propriety in having current fiction, which is so largely recreational, paid for by those who read it rather than from taxpayers' money.

In the middle ages books were chained securely to the desks to insure their undisturbed presence in the library.

FICTION COMES INTO ITS OWN IN MODERN LITERARY WORLD

Our fore-fathers, nurtured on The Bible and Pilgrim's Progress, were firmly convinced that the reading of novels was indicative of a light and frivolous mind. Two or three generations ago, perhaps it was, but could great-grandfather come into the modern library, no doubt he would soon be found browsing among the fiction shelves, happily engrossed in such a novel as would delight even his crusty soul.

For no longer is it the mark of a rapid mind to enjoy a novel. Rather, it is the mark of a well read man or woman to know something of the latest trends in literature and to be able to discuss intelligently one of the newer novels.

The novel has come into its own. Since the writing of Pamela in the eighteenth century, the art of novel-writing has grown and matured until that form of writing has come to have an integral place in modern literature. There are historical novels and detective or mystery stories; there are novels of romance, of love and courage and there are sociological novels; and there are many novels that claim to furnish nothing more than a few hours pure entertainment.

Not everyone is interested in history, however. Many a business man finds relaxation after a busy day in the world of commerce, not in a cloak-and-sword

Since 1924 the names of John Bradshaw Howarth and Baldwin Public Library have been so closely associated, that Birmingham seldom thinks of one without the other.

Mr. Howarth, who came here to live in 1920, entered into the spirit of affairs with such genuine and sincere interest that he became actively identified with many civic projects. Foremost among these was Baldwin Public Library.

When a vacancy occurred on the board in 1924, Mr. Howarth was elected to fill the post by other members of the board. Since that time he has performed the duties of secretary. The office is non-remunerative, but Mr. Howarth has given generously of his time, wisdom and energy. During those 13 years he has aided in piloting the Library through various periods in its development, watched its growth and triumphant removal into the present building in 1927, and was one of the leading spirits in helping to solve problems arising out of the depression. Because of his close connection with the Library during the past 13 years, this anniversary has greater significance for Mr. Howarth than for other members of the board.

To express appreciation of the service which Mr. Howarth—both an important factor in the shaping of culture and civic interests in the community. Before coming to Birmingham, Mr. Howarth was a resident of Detroit, to which city he came with his family in 1875. As treasurer of Piquette and Smith, a shoe manufacturing concern, Mr. Howarth was one of Detroit's outstanding business men, and was one of the organizers of the Detroit Board of Commerce.

Because of his long and distinctive connection with the Y. M. C. A., Mr. Howarth was called to serve with that organization in establishing leave areas for soldiers on furlough in France during the World War. Shortly after his return from abroad, he came to Birmingham to engage in the real estate and insurance field. In addition to his association with Baldwin Library, Mr. Howarth has held the offices of treasurer of St. James' Episcopal Church, secretary of the Rotary Club, treasurer of the Birmingham Real Estate Board, and one of the directors of the local Y. M. C. A.

century Paris were badly lighted, dirty and dangerous for the lone wayfarer; that Louis XIII wore the crown and Cardinal Richelieu governed the country from the shadow of the throne. Facts soon forgotten, all of them.

But let the student—or his parents, for that matter—read "The Three Musketeers" and he himself walks the dimly-lit streets fighting off footpads; rides for the queen's good name and burns with loyalty for king and country. He will remember forever the flavor of the period.

There have been historical novels dealing with every phase of history, from Ebers' *Larda* to the modern *They Seek a Country* by Francis Brett Young. It is a long way from the Egyptian palace of the former to the story of the Boer trek across Africa that characterizes the latter, both in time and spirit. Yet both are fascinating pictures not only of the time they depict, but of the period in which they were written.

Thrills For Business Man
 These two are only random examples of the historical novel; there are many such, and it may be safely said that there is no time or place known to historians that has not been embodied in a novel. It has even been said that the average reader learns more history from novels than he ever did in school.

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LIBRARY NOW PLACE FOR ALL

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needs—even to the kind of dog to take for his hunting expedition—four answer to these questions he comes to the library, finds the right book, and goes happily home to spend the evening in joyful study.

With the present cold weather, cannot members for books on winter sports, for Birmingham is blessed with easily accessible skating ponds and the younger set is enthusiastically outdoor-minded.

Seasonal demands are by no means the most important in a library, however. While it is necessary to be able to produce books on Christmas customs on the middle ages, spring gardening, or what to wear at a wedding with equal facility, there are other subjects for which the demand is steady and constant. Not so picturesque perhaps, but just as important, is the request for "a good history of England, please."

Books Answer Varied Wants
 Every occupation and interest is represented by books and it is the business of the librarian to find just what book answers a given need. An artist finds delight and enjoyment in the many books dealing with art histories, lives of famous painters, discussions of modern art. He finds practical applications for his talent in books on everything from poster design and advertising to the making of personal Christmas cards.

An economist wishes to find out more about the new cooperative movement in England, Sweden and Denmark. A musician consults Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians or borrows a book on the physics of musical sound. An architect wants a book describing the new architecture of Germany and Sweden; a newspaper man, a new book on advertising. And a schoolboy wants a book that will enable him to get in a report by tomorrow morning on the law courts of Athens.

Yet strangely enough, it is neither the special student nor the school boy that girl from whom comes the majority of requests for books dealing with particular subjects. The average man and woman, in Birmingham at least, is concerned with a wide variety of interests.

In a city of homes, homemaking is of supreme interest. Books on the management of a home, on child care, the psychology of child development and on new ways of preparing meals are always in demand but these things are to a woman what a book on architecture is to an architect—part of her business. Her other interests may range from painting to stamp collecting and antique tique glass. It is for these as well as the more prosaic type of books that she haunts the library.

Wanderlust Is Satisfied
 In most of us there is a never-quitte-forgotten dream—that of visiting far places some day. Few of us will ever really see the Taj Mahal or penetrate the jungles of Guatemala, but there is no reason why we should not read our fill about them. Men, and a few women, have wandered into every corner of the world and have written books about their experiences. In the library, these books cover a large section of the east wall of the reading room and at nearly every hour of the day, one may see avid readers standing there trying to decide whether this week it shall be Africa or South America or, perhaps, the Pacific Islands.

The library of today is a place of spiritual pleasure as well as of mental development. True, the history and science books are necessary, but there is shelf on shelf of books offering interest and entertainment that are the direct answer to the universal cry: "Give us something interesting to read!"

Though we think of libraries as a modern institution, they are as old as civilization. About 600 B. C. King Darius of Assyria had a library of more than 22,000 volumes.

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