

**Picture File Opens Door To New Field  
In Visual Education For Young And Old**

The picture file is one of the most recent developments in the library. The growing tendency toward visual education leads librarians to consider seriously the advisability of collecting objects and materials for circulation in addition to books, but the time and space and specialized information necessary for it prove to be a barrier. However, this library feels that it can take the first step toward such a goal by developing its collection of pictures.

In planning the types of pictures to be secured the users of the file are considered. Since Birmingham is a city of lovely homes and attractive gardens, there is a demand for details of architecture, color schemes, and suggestions for garden furniture and art. Costume collections are always necessary and are never large enough. Reproductions of the works of artists, both old masters and modern workmen are often requested. But by far the largest group of users of the picture file is the school children who need information for their many projects.

The sources of supply of the pictures is interesting. There have been many gifts, the largest being the \$20.00 from the Birmingham Woman's Club, which was applied on a recent purchase of a number of art reproductions in fine color. The American Association of University Women allowed the magazines remaining after their book sale to be clipped for pictures just before they were sold for old paper. A few sets of pictures have been bought, the funds being taken from library fines and dues.

Several of the sets of pictures deserve special mention. The largest is a collection showing the shields of the knights of King Arthur's Round Table, the mottoes in rich color illustrating the stories. There are three teaching units from the Informative Classroom Picture Association of Grand Rapids on the subjects Indian Life, Middle Ages and Life in Colonial America. A collection of post cards brought from England shows a delightful interpretation of fables and children by the young English artist, Margaret Tarrant.

It is fascinating to work with the picture collection, anticipating possible requests, but experience shows that it is just as apt to be a request for a picture of a tyrannosaur as the seasonal need for Pilgrim Fathers.

While, of course, this project is only in its infancy, it gives every promise of rapid growth.

**HEADS STAFF**



Miss Cooke

Since Oct. 23, 1934, when she came to Birmingham, Miss Adeline Cooke has presided as librarian and directed the destiny of Baldwin Public Library. To the many patrons to whom the library has become a civic home, Miss Cooke fills the role of gracious hostess and friendly advisor.

Her interest in the community at large and her personal concern for the individuals with whom she comes in contact, have endeared her to the reading public of Birmingham. Before coming here, Miss Cooke was associated for three years with the libraries of the Santa Monica (Calif.) High School and Junior College. Prior to that, she completed her graduate year of library training at the University of California at Berkeley.

Her previous experience in her profession is one of wide and varied contacts. She filled the position of acting head of the general reference division for one year at the Public Library of Seattle, Washington, after serving as reference librarian at the State College of Washington at Pullman, for four years.

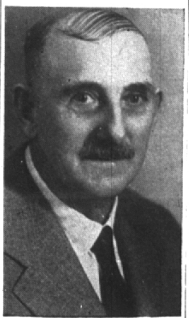
In Portland, Ore., Miss Cooke acted as high school librarian. Another interesting phase of her work was that of summer school instructor for teacher librarians, a course she conducted at the State College of Washington in 1931 and for three subsequent summers. She later conducted the same course for one year at

**Ransom Lake's Devotion To His Work  
Makes Beauty Spot Of Baldwin Library**

Hardly any one who has known Birmingham intimately can fail to have known Ransom Lake. He is a hearty, happy man, who is a good deal in love with life. But he has a very earnest and serious side to his nature—that is his great delight in the care of the library. He has spent ten years of untiring effort, and these ten years undoubtedly stand in his memory like ten golden candlesticks. He has succeeded in making the library the most picturesque building in Birmingham. The polished floors, spotless windows, beautiful lawn and clean walks bring him compliments from all those who visit the library.

He is thoroughly a gentleman, not merely in external manners and looks, but to the innermost fibres and core of his heart: sweet-tempered, fastidious, sensitive, and gifted with the warmest of smiles; gay and full of humor, even in the case of Mr. Lake, these things are not so serious. There is a cheery, old-school air about him. He is loved, more vividly than many men of mature years and girls. We think he is fond of reverting to it, and all through his life shall cherish such young friendships.

We of the library staff know that the least appreciation shown on our part stirs smiles and laughter within him and his face



—Photo by Arnold Mr. Lake

lights up with a winning expression, and a laughing, kindly glance of the eye. We are sure that we should grieve every day in his absence from the library because we believe Mr. Lake's presence is indispensable to the comfort and even the happy atmosphere of it. Is it any wonder that it has become the dearest spot on earth for him?

**LIBRARY HISTORY  
TOLD IN REPRINT**

Reprint from the Golden Anniversary Number of The Birmingham Eclectic, of May 17, 1928.

With a present annual circulation of 37,546 books, and 7,773 books on its shelves, the Martha Baldwin Library, bears the little resemblance to the Ladies' Library Society, which had its humble origin more than 60 years ago when a band of 19 men and Templar Lodge voted to turn the treasury into a book fund and start a library, Birmingham was then a village of about 600, whose people felt little need of the library, and the members of the society met with little encouragement.

The 19 charter members who started Birmingham's first library were Frank Allen, Ephie Bailey, Martha Baldwin, G. Daniels, M. Castle, Elverson T. Jenks, Mrs. Griffin, T. Hastings, Julia Hughts, Busey Elder, Jennie Keyes, E. Partridge, M. M. Randall, Rollin Scheyler, Anna Wilson, Sarah Wiley and Libby Tromy.

Not so long afterward, 19 others joined. The first annual report showed \$68.47 in the treasury. Of this amount, \$49.75 was spent for 48 books which comprised the first library collection. Mrs. Griffin was president of the first society, with Elverson Jenks vice-president, Libbie Irving was treasurer and Martha Baldwin secretary and librarian. The first so-called library was in the home of Mrs. Edwin Baldwin, but a short time afterward it was moved to the home of Mrs. John Baldwin.

The first building ever to house the library was a Merrill Methodist church on Woodward street, which was erected there in 1875, where volunteers and librarians had charge of them. Books could be taken out on Saturday afternoons only.

By the constant effort of the women of the society, the building was finally paid for and made as attractive as possible. Every thing from Soap Shows, portrayals of soap, to shoe parades were organized to raise money for the organization. The Ladies' Library Hall became the social center of the community. Theatricals were staged there and dances held.

Meeting with success in their efforts to raise money, the society purchased a lot at Woodward and Maple avenues, thinking that they might interest the village authorities in building a civic building which would house the library as well as other civic institutions.

But the women of the society were intent upon erecting a library on their newly-purchased lot. As a last resort, they threatened to put up a sheet iron building. This produced results and the men finally agreed to cooperate. Individuals contributed bricks for the building and bonds were sold. Miss Martha Baldwin loaned \$2,500 on a mortgage. The building cost about \$4,000, and the lot \$1,500. December 1, 1895, marked the opening of the new building, with a banquet. Closely following this event came the affairs to raise money for the new building.

Mrs. Kate Alger was librarian in this new building, and under her the library was kept open every Saturday from two until five p. m. and from seven to eight. At this time there were 1,820 books in the collection. A room on the ground floor was given over to the library and the rest of the building was rented, used for library benefits or for other social affairs. During the winter of 1896 the women of the society took over the publishing of The Birmingham Eclectic for one week, among their projects for raising money.

Not until 1907 was the library turned over to the village, and then not without a great deal of controversy. At this time the library was moved up to the second floor, and Miss Baldwin can-

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**'Dynamic' Is The Word For Founder  
Of Library, Says Prominent Citizen**



Martha Baldwin

1840-1913

By Charles J. Shain

Had Miss Martha Baldwin lived in this generation she would have merited the title "dynamic!" In addition to her vocation as principal of an important school in the city of Detroit from Monday to Friday inclusive, she found time on weekends and vacations to sponsor and direct many local civic and altruistic projects. She was the motivating power in the Village Improvement Society, the Cemetery Association, and many another association which had its inception in her mother's home on West Maple Avenue.

Miss Baldwin lived in the horse and buggy age and with her horse, "Billie," hitched to a phaeton, she made her Saturday rounds, collected reports on progress and left suggestions for new plans and ideas.

When it was decided to move the library from the rear of the Old Town Hall at Merrill and Bates to more adequate quarters, a site at the corner of Maple and Woodward was secured. Upon this was erected a building which contemplated a hall or auditorium on the second floor with a stage at the rear and a small

**STEREOSCOPES  
INTEREST YOUTH**

The Saturday story hour starts for many boys and girls, not at 10:30 when the stories begin to be told, but at ten o'clock when the library doors are opened. A few are on the steps at half past nine, greeting their friends as they arrive.

It looks as if they have come early to avoid the rush for the stereoscopes. Although they have seen the same pictures many times, they seem to find fresh pleasure each time they recognize the volcanic mountains of Japan, Indians in costume, Eskimos, and other wonderful things and people. There are never quite enough pictures or glasses to supply the demand.

A row of children is formed at the foot of the steps to the auditorium long before half-past eight. At this time there is a dash to exchange books. The tiniest children are usually accompanied by big brothers or sisters. Often a few come too late to hear the stories, for it is not a continuous show.

In the nineteenth century, Melvin Dewey, a man whose hobby was efficiency, was able to divide all human knowledge into ten sections, which code, divided and redivided is used in nearly all the public libraries of America.

gallery, the rental to help defray expenses, and a library on the first floor.

Changing conditions of civic and business life led to changes in this arrangement from time to time but the building continued to be used as a library until the present building was occupied.

The first building was financed by high pressure money raising schemes of the times, benefit sales of bricks to be used in the construction and finally a direct loan from Miss Baldwin secured by a mortgage.

Never content with the struggle and foreseeing a lack of leadership that might endanger the project, Miss Baldwin began a campaign to have the city take on the library and make it what it is today, a free circulating library supported by public funds. In an unfriendly atmosphere, afraid of any increase of taxes and preferring the status quo, more than one attempt to accept the gift was lost but her persistence was finally rewarded.

Included in the terms of the transfer went the plan to raise by taxation a sum not to exceed one mill in any year and Miss Baldwin agreed to the cancellation of her mortgage, although at the same time placing in the deed a reversion clause favoring the University of Michigan in the event of a failure to maintain library service.

There were many interesting events in the days of the trials elections. The little village got considerably wrought up and took sides vigorously. Most commissioners were older men, taxpayers of some proportion, and at one time a bitter opponent, Mr. John A. Perry of Bates St. as village president refused consistently to put the motion calling for a vote on the submission, when it looked as though it might carry.

However blocking tactics proved futile; the plan carried and as a result of the untiring efforts of many women well known in Birmingham history, stimulated and encouraged by Miss Baldwin's forceful leadership, you are now able to enjoy the present splendid service for which the early efforts laid the foundation.

Miss Baldwin has left a work in this city which is not confined to any one service. She was an efficient teacher with administrative experience for more than 25 years. She was also a city planner, having converted a gravel pit at the intersection of Maple and Southfield into a park and playground. She also acquired seemingly worthless creek bottom land which she later gave to the city as a park.

The auditorium in the Baldwin High School is the result of the provision of her will, made when such innovations were rare. And I am sure she would heartily approve the present civic center, if she were among us today.