

HISTORY OF THE FLORENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The first circulating library in Florence appears to have been established during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It possessed a number of books, operated on the plan of paid membership, and closed before the end of the century. All of its books were lost or scattered, and none of them can be located at the present day.

A few years after this library came to its end, a group of women of literary tastes organized a second circulating library in the city. Support for this was to be provided from annual membership dues of One Dollar per year for each member and from fines collected on overdue books. At its inception, room for it was furnished gratis in the home of Mrs. R. L. Brunson, and subsequently quarters were provided free of cost in the City Hall. The enterprise thus launched lacked, however, the two prime essentials of success, viz: (1) definite organization, and (2) assured adequate financial support, and after several years of struggle, during which many of the books were lost, this library was closed. After remaining in an outhouse for some years, the books that were left were donated to the library of the New High School.

Although failures, these libraries served at least the purpose of stimulating interest and of showing the need of a real institution of the kind; but as yet no one among its advocates had suggested a feasible plan for obtaining and operating such an institution. The two institutions that had thus perished were public in the sense that membership therein was open to the public, but membership was a condition precedent to the enjoyment of the advantages they offered.

Efforts were next made by the city officials and others to procure from the Carnegie Board the funds necessary to establish a library that would be free as well as public, but the amount offered by that board was so utterly inadequate and being conditioned on the free and indiscriminate

use by all races of the facilities to be furnished thereby, that the offer was declined, and the hope of obtaining aid from this source was abandoned.

In September, 1917, Henry E. Davis, Esq., a lawyer of Florence, was elected to fill the vacancy in the Board of School Commissioners caused by the death of Mr. Hartwell M. Ayer. The new member had received a large part of his legal training under Hon. C. A. Woods, United States Circuit Judge, of Marion, S. C., the founder of the Marion Public Library, and was an earnest advocate of Judge Woods' well-known views as to the part a public library, properly selected and properly conducted, can play in the elevation of a community in culture and refinement. He had seen these theories tested and proven to be correct in Marion, and was also thoroughly familiar with and an advocate of the system of school ownership and control of such institutions, under which the Marion Library was making such a great success. Shortly after becoming a member, therefore, he proposed to the Board that steps be taken to establish and operate a library on similar lines. This was the first proposal to a body possessing the necessary tax-levying power of a practical plan for the establishment of such an institution, and is really the basis of the plan that was afterwards adopted and under which the library was established and put into operation. At that time, however, it was impossible for the Board to do anything with the proposition, as the most pressing need then was for a new high school, so action on the library had to wait.

Shortly after the close of the Great War, a large gathering of representative men of the city assembled at the Pinewood Club House, near Five Points crossroads. Among the matters discussed at this meeting was that of providing a suitable memorial for the soldiers of such war, this to be erected by popular subscription. In the course of the discussion, Mr. Davis, of the Board of School Commissioners, after setting forth

the need and advantages of a public library, suggested that the memorial take the form of a memorial building to be used for library purposes, with suitable tablets placed on the walls and with one or more rooms set apart for strictly memorial purposes, and that a campaign be inaugurated to raise the funds. In conclusion, he offered to begin the movement by subscribing thereto the sum of one thousand dollars. The proposition, however, did not seem to meet with approval, and no action was taken thereon.

In the course of the next few days, Miss Jane B. Evans, who was a leader in the movement to erect a suitable memorial to these soldiers, called on Mr. Davis and asked him for an expression of his views. These were readily given, and she was told that they had their origin in observation of the memorials in the Widener Library at Harvard. Whether the idea of a memorial library had previously occurred to her is not clear, but the fact remains that it appealed to her so strongly that she threw her whole soul into the project, and with the zeal of a crusader, sought to make it a reality. Some of the leading men of the community, notably Dr. F. H. McLeod, became interested in the movement, and she appointed a large committee, with him as chairman, to solicit funds. She also organized a band of loyally patriotic women who faithfully labored for many months to earn a portion of the necessary funds by conducting a high grade cafe in the city. It was soon realized, however, that owing to the reaction following the war and the steady decline in values that had already commenced, it was going to be impossible to raise the necessary funds by popular subscription. For this reason, the campaign was never even commenced, and though the faithful women continued to operate the cafe for some time, they made no profit from their labors, and finally were forced to close it. Thus the efforts to obtain a library by appealing to the patriotic motives of citizens to establish it in memory of their

soldiers, both living and dead, came to naught. It was now perfectly evident that if Florence ever should have a library it must be obtained by taxation.

Meantime the Board of School Commissioners, which was then composed of Dr. N. W. Hicks, Chairman, J. W. Ivey, J. C. McGlenaghan, R. E. Currin and Henry E. Davis, had been taking steps that were destined to be of great consequence. With a full realization of the great need of such an institution in the community, Mr. Davis of that Board, in the fall of 1919, on his own initiative and at his own expense, devoted much study to methods for obtaining, and ways and means for operating and maintaining, a free public library, in the course of which he personally consulted and obtained the views of some of the leading citizens of the state interested in similar projects, notably of Judge C. A. Woods and of Henry Buck, Esq., both of Marion, S. C., both close friends of Mr. Davis and the latter being the author of the statute enacted in 1912 under which the Marion Public Library was then operating (27 Stats., 696). In consequence of these studies, Mr. Davis proposed to the Board that they go on record as being in favor of the establishment and operation of a public library by the School District, and that to this end the charter of the School District be amended so as to incorporate therein the essential provision of the Marion Library Act (27 Stats. 696), with this important modification, that the maximum tax be three mills instead of one mill, the object of the modification being to provide funds for building as well as operation. This proposition was unanimously adopted, and Mr. Davis framed a bill incorporating the proposed amendment as sections 15 and 16 thereof, which was introduced by Senator D. Gordon Baker, and subsequently without change became law by the Act of the General Assembly approved March 11, 1920 (31 Stat., 1480). Briefly, the amendment so made authorized and empowered the Board of School Commissioners "to accept

or establish upon such terms as they deemed right any public library or
 libraries", to be "managed and controlled by said board of school com-
 missioners", and to provide funds for library purposes by levying a tax
 on the "school district, not in excess of three mills", such levy to be
 ordered as the result of an election of the qualified electors of the
 district, called by the board, and when once voted, to remain until voted
 off by an election similarly called. With the passage of this act, for
 the first time the way was opened and the means provided for the establi-
 ment of the public library, the only question being whether the electors
 would ever take advantage of the opportunity thus offered them.
 Being fully occupied at the time with the erection and equipment
 of the New High School plant on the lot bounded North by Elm Street and
 West by Dargan Street, the board of school commissioners, of which Mr.
 Henry E. Davis had become secretary and Mr. A. A. Cohen a member in lieu
 of Mr. Levy, who removed from the ward, allowed the plan for a memorial
 library to proceed without any suggestion on their part, although it was
 then manifest that such plan had already failed, and awaited the completion
 of the New High School project before taking further action. This building
 was completed and occupied in the fall of 1921, and shortly thereafter
 the board established a library therein, with Miss Corrie Busenbury as
 librarian. This library opened with about eighteen hundred volumes on
 the shelves and with about forty magazines on the reading tables. Some
 of these books came from the second circulating library to which reference
 has been made, others were donated by private individuals, while still
 others were purchased by the board. From the very beginning the high
 school pupils eagerly took advantage of these new opportunities, and by
 the end of the school year it could boast of a weekly circulation of
 five hundred volumes, and in the language of Superintendent Wade, "it had
 instilled the desire for good wholesome reading into the pupils" (Vide,

Report of 1921-22, Minutes, p. 23).

The marked improvement in school work, and the eagerness with which the pupils availed themselves of the opportunity to read worth-while literature caused the Board of School Commissioners to appreciate even more keenly the necessity of having a well-equipped public library as the crown and capstone of the ideal school system they had planned to establish, but they felt that the favorable hour for launching a movement to accomplish it had not yet come.

Though considerably discouraged by the failure of the memorial library project, the club women of the city continued to feel that a public library would fill a real need in the community, and especially in their work; but they were without practical plans or means for establishing and operating it. Finally, early in March, 1923, Mrs. T. B. Haynesworth, the President of the City Federation of Women's Clubs of Florence for that year, invited Mr. Davis, Secretary of the Board of School Commissioners, to address a meeting of the members of such federation and of other interested women and there outline plans and make suggestions for the establishment of a public library. The secretary reported the receipt of this invitation to the Board, whereupon they, realizing that the opportunity they had so long wished for had come, requested him to accept such invitation. This he did, and appearing before such women's meeting, held in the auditorium of the Central Grammar School in the block between Palmetto and Pine, informed them that a public library could be established either as a municipal enterprise under Sections 4480-4490 of Volume 3 of the Code of 1922, or as a school district enterprise under the amended charter of the School District of the City of Florence. In this address, he strongly advocated proceeding under the school district charter, principally for the reasons (1) that the taxing area of the school district was five times that of the city, and consequently a larger revenue would be obtained;

(2) that under the school charter, there could be no political appointees; and (3) that negroes would be entitled to use a municipally owned library, which would not be the case with a school district library, by reason of the Constitutional provision requiring separate school facilities for the races. He further suggested that while the school district would own any library erected by it and that the ultimate control and management thereof would be vested by law in its Board of School Commissioners, the citizens might select at the annual school meetings a Library Board which the Board of School Commissioners could charge with certain ministerial functions in operating the library. Following this address, it was unanimously decided by those present to work for the establishment of a public library by the school district. They further decided to call a meeting of citizens at 8 P. M. on April 3, 1923, in the auditorium of the New High School for the purpose of allowing fuller discussion by those interested in the project, and if it should then be deemed advisable, to pass the necessary resolution requesting the Board of School Commissioners to call an election to authorize the levying of the library tax.

Pursuant to notice duly given, this mass meeting of citizens was held in the auditorium of the New High School at the time designated, at which time Mr. Davis repeated in substance the address previously made at the meeting of the club women. The Chairman of the Board of School Commissioners also addressed the meeting supplementing the remarks of the secretary. Each of these stated that the library if built would be owned by the school district and its control and management would be in the Board of School Commissioners, but that they proposed, in order to relieve themselves of some of the burdens, to allow the citizens to select a library board of five members to be charged with certain ministerial function under the Board of School Commissioners after the library was completed. In fact, Mr. Davis had already completed and had with him the draft of a

resolution to this effect, which was unanimously adopted by the Board of School Commissioners at their special meeting two days later (See Minutes, page 41). After hearing the proposal of the Board of School Commissioners as thus presented by two of the members, the meeting unanimously adopted a resolution requesting the board to call an election for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of the district the question whether a special library tax of three mills should be levied.

This request having been transmitted to the Board, they held a special meeting on April 5, 1923, at which, on motion of the secretary, a resolution was unanimously adopted ordering an election "to be held at the City Hall, in the City of Florence, on Tuesday, the 8th day of May, 1923, at which shall be submitted to the qualified electors of said school district the question of levying a tax of three mills on said school district for the support and maintenance of a public library therein" (Minutes, page 41).

Pending the date of the election, several conferences were held between Mrs. Haynesworth, President of the City Federation, and members of the Board, at which was impressed on her the necessity of thorough organization and constant work on the part of the women, especially on the day of the election, if they expected the result to be favorable to the library. On election day, the women worked with untiring zeal, and largely by their efforts the proposition to authorize the levy of a special library tax of three mills was carried by a substantial majority.

With the special levy duly authorized, the success of the library project seemed assured, provided it could be financed. At this juncture, Mr. Frank J. Brand, President of Commercial & Savings Bank, the strongest bank in the city, and who was an earnest advocate of the library, informed the Board that he would finance the proposition by floating the serial notes of the school district. This timely offer on the part of Mr. Brand

provided the real essential for the success of the undertaking, namely, readily available funds not only for commencing but for carrying the work to completion. Needless to say, the Board immediately accepted his offer. Too much commendation can hardly be given Mr. Brand for the invaluable assistance thus rendered at the critical stage of the undertaking.

Under the terms of the resolution of April 5, 1923, making provision for the establishment and maintenance of the library (Vide, Resolution, Minutes, p. 41), the annual taxpayers meeting held on May 11, 1923, elected as members of the Library Board Dr. F. H. McLeod, Mrs. R. L. Brunson, H. A. Brunson, J. M. Lawton and Miss Jane E. Evans, the board being elected at that time for the reason that the Board of School Commissioners were of opinion that the library would be complete and in operation before the next annual taxpayers meeting. The Library Board met and organized by electing Dr. F. H. McLeod as Chairman and Mrs. Brunson as Secretary. For the next several months, the two boards considered the question of a suitable site for the building, the majority of the Library Board favoring the southeast corner of the Central School property. The Board of School Commissioners, however, declined to permit the use of this portion of the Central School grounds for such purposes, and requested the Library Board to obtain and submit offers on other sites, which they did on October 22, 1923. Of the sites so offered, the General W. W. Harllee home lot at the northwest corner of Pine and Irby Streets was not only the most desirable by reason both of size and of location, but was the cheapest per front foot of any lot centrally located (Vide, Offers, Minutes, p. 67). Accordingly, on motion of Mr. A. A. Cohen, the Board of School Commissioners, on November 1, 1923, voted unanimously to purchase it at the price of \$20,000, and instructed the secretary to examine the title thereto and prepare the deed, which was accordingly done. At the same meeting, this Board, on motion of Mr. R. E. Currin, unanimously

chose Wilkins & Hopkins as architects and directed them to prepare and submit to the Board plans for their approval.

The Library Board were then requested to make suggestions, if they so desired, as to the type of building to be constructed, but after waiting a reasonable time without hearing from them, and concluding that they had nothing to suggest, the architects proceeded with the preparation of the plans. While full credit must be given the architects for working out the details of the plans and specifications and for the general excellency of the entire structure, yet it is but fair to mention the part Dr. N. W. Hicks, the Chairman of the Board, contributed thereto. The type of the building, the providing of club and social rooms in the basement for meetings of the women, the location of large reading rooms in the front of the main floor, the placing of the stack room entirely to the rear, the mezzanine with the double stairway leading to it, and the vaulted ceilings were all of his ideas, even if developed as to details by the architects. He was also largely responsible for the adoption in the first instance and for insistence on the use of shale brick for the outside construction, over the protest of some citizens of the community. Hence, to him more than any other, the building owes its utility as well as artistic excellence.

The selection of the names of authors carved over the windows was made jointly by Mr. Brunson and Mr. Davis.

Upon the completion of the plans for the building, a copy thereof was on April 24, 1924, by order of the Board of School Commissioners, submitted by the Secretary to the American Library Association, Chicago, Ill., for criticism and advice, and was returned with the only suggestion that the building as proposed was too small. Not deeming this objection valid, the Board of School Commissioners made ready to let contracts for the construction of the building and its appurtenances, with the result

that on May 31, 1924, they entered into a contract with Haynesworth & Stuckey of Florence to erect the building, including the electric wiring and fixtures for the price of \$70,519.00, this to be subject to certain deductions if artificial stone should be used where natural was specified, and a contract with Pettigrew & Company, of Florence, to install the heating and plumbing for the price of \$4,886.00, making a total of \$75,405.00. These contracts specified that the work would be complete and the building ready for occupancy by March 31, 1925. The actual work of construction commenced on August 27, 1924, but owing to delays in obtaining materials and adverse weather conditions, the building was not completed on time, and was not actually accepted by the Board of School Commissioners until August 25, 1925.

On January 8, 1924, the Board of School Commissioners issued notes for Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) in order to make payment for the Harillee property, and on September 1, 1924, they borrowed from Commercial & Savings Bank Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000.00) additional for construction and other purposes, the latter being a temporary loan maturing March 1, 1925, and being made with the distinct understanding that the Board would procure the passage of the necessary legislation authorizing it to be taken up by long term serial promissory notes. Accordingly, Mr. Davis, under the instructions of the Board, prepared and through Senator A. H. Williams, procured the enactment of a statute approved February 11, 1925 (34 Stat., 716), materially enlarging the powers of the School District of the City of Florence. By the terms of this act, the school district, among other things, was specifically "authorized and empowered to borrow money for conducting, operating and maintaining schools and libraries, and for erecting, equipping, repairing and maintaining school and library buildings, in said school district, all of which are declared to be school purposes, and to issue its promissory notes therefor", these

notes to be secured by pledge of "the anticipated taxes or other resources of the district." The same act ratified and confirmed all outstanding notes of the school district.

Following the passage of this statute, the Board instructed the secretary to confer with Mr. Frank J. Brand for the purpose of obtaining the loan of funds sufficient for purchasing the furniture, stacks and other fixtures of the library, and a reasonable number of books with which to begin operations. The secretary in due course reported to the Board that Mr. Brand was agreeable to the proposition and that the funds would be available when desired.

After considering the matter carefully, the Board reached the conclusion that in the library proper and in the children's room only the best library furniture should be used, that the stack room should be equipped with steel shelving, and that in order for the library to be efficient at least five thousand volumes should be provided for the adult department and one thousand volumes for the children's department. They estimated that all of these things could be purchased at a cost of not more than Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00), and accordingly arranged to borrow that sum from Commercial & Savings Bank, which loan was actually consummated on May 18, 1925, in order to be ready to pay for the books as they came in.

On April 23, 1925, the Board of School Commissioners met to consider bids on the furniture for the children's room and the reading room, and on the steel stacks, and awarded the contract for the furniture to the Library Bureau of New York at the price of \$3,294.25, and the contract for the stacks to the Art Metal Construction Company of Jamestown, N. Y. at the price of \$1,975. Stacks for the children's room were not included at this time, as it had not been decided whether to use wood or steel in this room, and this was left to a special committee composed of the chairman and

secretary, with power to act after making a full investigation. This committee was further directed to execute the contracts that had been let, and to purchase the furniture and fittings for the other rooms, together with any items that may have been omitted in the purchases for the reading and stack rooms. These instructions were carried out, and most of the additional furniture and fittings were obtained from W. M. Waters, a local dealer. After investigation, the committee chose wood stacks for the children's room, and these were purchased from the Library Bureau.

Shortly after the organization of the Library Board, Miss Evans removed to Philadelphia, and Dr. McLeod resigned in May, 1924. At the instance of the secretary of the Board of School Commissioners, Messrs. Brunson and Lawton of the Library Board appeared before the former board and requested that Mrs. Henry Buck, widow of the man whose Marion Library act furnished the model adopted by the Florence School District, be elected as Librarian. Mr. Davis urged that this be done, and on motion of Mr. McClenaghan, she was unanimously elected, with the understanding that she should report for duty on March 1, 1925. Mrs. Buck, who was then taking a course in library methods at the University of Virginia, was notified by the secretary of her election and the date she would be expected to begin work.

Promptly at the time set, the Librarian reported, and enthusiastically began preparations for the accessioning, cataloguing, and other details necessary to make a library ready for use. The Board of School Commissioners had already purchased and received a few books, and others were being constantly ordered, so that she had her hands full from the outset. This preparatory work was carried on in the librarian's own home until the close of school, when it was transferred to the home economics rooms in the New High School building, whence it was again transferred to the library building on August 25, 1925.

On March 9, 1925, there were three vacancies in the Library Board, the two previously mentioned, and that of Mrs. R.L. Brunson, whose term had expired, and on that date these were temporarily filled by the Board of School Commissioners by the selection of Mrs. C. C. Brown, Mrs. R. L. Brunson and Sam J. Royall.

From the very inception of the project, the Board of School Commissioners felt that since the library was to be a part of the white school system and that since they were specifically charged by law with responsibility for its control and management, and also with responsibility for the proper expenditure of any and all funds borrowed or to be borrowed for its construction and equipment, it was a non-delegable duty on their part to see not only that the proper building and furnishings were obtained but also that proper and suitable books were adopted and purchased. Realizing from their long experience in the management of the city schools that a library made up principally of works of fiction would not fill the real needs of the community, and especially of the pupils of the schools, the Board determined from the beginning that the library must have real educational value and to this end that it must cover not only fiction and general literature, but in a general way the whole field of knowledge, and must be particularly strong in works for general reference, historical works, especially those dealing with our section, and works of our own authors or those relating to our own state. Special attention was also to be devoted to the useful and industrial arts, to the fine arts, to natural science, and to religious literature, books of the latter class, however, advocating radical views to be barred. In brief, the vision of the Board was for a library splendidly equipped in a material way, and with a collection of books as complete and comprehensive as the means of the district could afford, in order that the material and intellectual equipment of the institution might be in perfect keeping.

A mere circulating collection of books was never in their thoughts.

Having adopted such a policy, it only remained to carry it into execution. Usually the policies of the Board involving the expenditure of money are put into effect by the Chairman and Secretary on whose joint checks in the name of the Board all payments are made. In this instance, the usual procedure was followed, the Chairman electing to look after the material equipment and to leave the other to the supervision of the Secretary. Under this division of the responsibility, the Chairman supervised the construction of the building, selected the furniture and other equipment for all the rooms that were not provided for in the contracts signed on April 23d before mentioned, and directed the installation of all the furniture and other material equipment.

The Secretary early in March entered upon his duty of supervising the selection of suitable books and of making provision for their purchase, and as the very first step requested Mr. Brunson to call a meeting of the Library Board for reorganization. This was done, with the result that Mr. Brunson was made Chairman. A conference then followed between these two, at which the policy of the Board of School Commissioners with reference to the number and nature of the books to be bought, all selections and expenditures therefor, to be subject to the approval of that board, was thoroughly considered with the view of devising a plan for executing it in such a way as to secure the best results. After due deliberation, they decided that a list of foundation books should be prepared and submitted to the Board of School Commissioners for approval, and upon such approval that Mr. Brunson and Mr. Frank R. Jones, of Florence, an expert book salesman, should be sent to New York to purchase them. In the preparation of this list, it was agreed that the selection of children's books and of works of fiction should be left entirely to the Library Board and the Librarian, but that as to the other departments, full expert

While still at the University of Virginia, Mrs. Buck furnished the Secretary of the Board of School Commissioners, at his request, a list of reference works, and with but few exceptions these were subsequently adopted. The Librarian also lent to the Secretary a copy of the catalogue of the Library of Charlottesville, Va., and from this he, the Librarian and the members of the Library Board made many selections. Selections were also made in a similar way from lists of approved works furnished by the

works.
selected by Messrs. Brunson and Davis, as were also many of the religious works, such as those of Holbrook, Audubon, Bachman and Forcher were largely The very valuable collection of Caroliniana, and some of the rare scientific were selected by Messrs. Brunson and Davis entirely with his assistance. that of Confederate history. In fact, the books for the latter department Church of Florence, not only in the field of religious literature but in recommendation of Dr. H. Tucker Graham, pastor of the First Presbyterian of which were largely adopted. Valuable selections were also made on the and of Dr. Wm. M. McPherson of Columbia Seminary, Columbia, S. C., all religious lists of Dr. Walter W. Moore of Union Seminary, Richmond, Va. Dr. Andrew C. Moore, both of the University of South Carolina, and the the literature list of Dr. George A. Manchope and the scientific list of of the History department of the Presbyterian College of South Carolina, made. Notable among these were the history list of Dr. James B. Kennedy as a result of which many valuable lists were submitted and suggestions pendence with some of the leading educators and ministers of this section, adopted in regard to the other departments, had begun an extensive corres- In the meantime, Mr. Davis, acting under the plan that had been obtained by her covering these two departments.

Librarian accordingly made the selections from suggested printed lists advice and assistance should be sought and obtained. The Board and the

Librarian in fields other than fiction and juvenile literature. Selections of much value were also made as the result of visits to the Marion Library.

In April, Mr. Davis collected from all those who had taken part in making the selections the pencil memoranda that had been made showing such selections, and from such memoranda compiled in his own handwriting a complete classified list of all the books selected. This list covered the entire field (except religious and juvenile books, lists of which were made up by him and adopted later), and contained the names of some four thousand volumes. After being so prepared, it was transcribed on the typewriter, was adopted by the Library Board and by the Chairman of that Board was submitted to the Board of School Commissioners for approval. This approval was given on May 14, 1925, and the list thereby became the official list of foundation books for the library.

As the work progressed it became necessary to make additions to the foundation list, and in general the method of selecting these, with the same division of labor and the same supervision, was that followed in the case of the first list. In choosing the books on these supplementary lists, many valuable selections were made in the fields of fiction and juvenile literature on the advice of the two experts who had been employed to assist the Librarian in the work of cataloguing. A fine practical supplementary list was also made up after school opened from the suggestions made to the Secretary as his instance by the teachers in the City Schools.

In thus supervising the selection and purchases of the books and their preparation for use, the Secretary was in daily conference with both the Librarian and the Chairman of the Library Board from the middle of March until the library was opened to the public in November, and everything went forward with perfect harmony and under a steady purpose on the part of all to see that for the expenditures made full value should be received. While

it entailed immense labor, especially on the part of those actually making up the lists and conducting the correspondence, the result of these methods amply justified all that was done, as thereby was finally selected and acquired a collection of books that filled to a remarkable degree the ideal originally set up,--a collection that has been pronounced by more than one competent judge to be without a peer in this section.

At the annual taxpayers meeting held on May 14, 1925, the Chairman of the Library Board exhibited the foundation list, and made a report on the plan that had been adopted for acquiring the books. The same meeting elected Mr. H. L. Johnson a member of the Board of School Commissioners in place of Mr. Cohen, and Mesdames C. C. Brown and R. L. Brunson and Mr. Sam J. Royall to the places they were filling on the Library Board.

A copy of the foundation list was first submitted by Mr. Frank R. Jones to Mr. J. T. Gittman of Columbia, S. C., who supplied a number of volumes. Thus was established a valuable connection, and Mr. Gittman in the course of the next several months was able to obtain for those in charge many of the best books shown not only on the original list but on the supplements thereto.

In accordance with the previous decision, Messrs. Brunson and Jones were on May 18, 1925, sent to New York to purchase books. In addition to several copies of the list, they carried a letter from the Board of School Commissioners showing their authority. The result of this trip was most gratifying. Mr. Jones, being an expert book man, was able to get not only the best quality but the very best prices, and as a consequence the better part of the foundation list was bought at a saving of more than two thousand dollars. Relations were also established at this time with the New York houses that resulted in very material savings not only as to the remaining books on the lists but in future selections. Perhaps the most important of these was that with Baker & Taylor Company, from which

company most of the new books were subsequently purchased. The cost of the trip was less than five hundred dollars, Mr. Brunson as a member of the Library Board giving his services gratuitously, while Mr. Jones was employed on a per diem basis. Of course, the expenses of each were paid.

In accordance with the original resolution of April 5, 1923, a list of books was selected in July, 1925, as the foundation for a library in the Wilson School for the negroes. After making this list, it and a list of the books for the public library that had not yet been secured were delivered to Mr. Jones, who again made a trip north to buy them. This trip was likewise satisfactory in its results, as well as in its cost.

While realizing that the initial cost would be higher, the Board of School Commissioners, after considering the question from all angles, decided to have the children's books doublestitched, as they would give more than twice the service when so bound. Consequently, the contract for the majority of these was given to The Hunting Company of Springfield, Mass., specialists in this type of binding.

The proper preparation of six thousand volumes for use by the public is a task of no small magnitude, and a task that would require one person, no matter how expert, many months of steady labor to accomplish. No one recognized this more clearly than did the Board of School Commissioners, and as they were particularly anxious to have the facilities of the library available by the opening of the next school term, they instructed the Librarian to employ the assistants needed to bring about this result. Under this arrangement, Mrs. S. M. Wetmore and Misses Ida and Florence Johnston, all of Florence, rendered much valuable service of a non-technical nature, Mrs. Oliver P. Holden, also of Florence, an expert in drafting, shellaced, lettered and numbered the backs of the books, while Miss Katherine Carnes, librarian of Wesleyan College, Magon, Georgia, and Miss Helen Pearson, of the staff of the Olivia Raney Library, Raleigh, N. C.,

both experts in their line, did most of the cataloguing beside rendering other valuable service. Unfortunately Miss Carnes could give but eight weeks, and Miss Pearson but two weeks to this work, and although the Librarian made exhaustive efforts to do so, it was impossible to procure a successor to complete the work they had so well begun. Being fully occupied with other necessary preparatory details, the Librarian could not herself complete the cataloguing in time for the proposed opening, consequently the opening had to be postponed. Acting under the instructions of the Board of School Commissioners, the Librarian continued her efforts to find an expert cataloguer to assist in completing the preparatory work, and finally employed Miss Mary A. Lingenfelter of Brookline, Pennsylvania, who agreed to come the middle of October.

In the meantime, on September 10, 1925, the Board of School Commissioners adopted rules for the actual operation of the library after it should be placed in the administrative charge of the Library Board following the dedication services. These rules were drafted by a committee composed of Henry E. Davis, Chairman, N. W. Hicks and John W. Moore, Superintendent of the City Schools. They clearly defined the relations of the two boards, prescribed a budget system of expenditures by the Library Board to be reported to and audited by the Board of School Commissioners every sixty days, a schedule of hours for keeping the library open, the free use of its reading rooms by all white persons of good repute, for the withdrawal of books free of charge by all white citizens of the school district, and by the white teachers of the county, and for the withdrawal of books by white citizens of other sections of the county under regulations to be adopted by the Library Board. Provision was also made for the impartial use of the club rooms by the various women's organizations of the city.

Following a conference with the Librarian, the Library Committee, consisting of the Chairman and Secretary, reported to the Board of School

Commissioners on October 5, 1925, that an expert cataloguer had at last been secured to complete the preparatory work, and that this would enable the Librarian to be ready to open the library to the public by November 1, 1925. A resolution was thereupon adopted appointing W. W. Hicks, Henry E. Davis, John W. Moore, and H. A. Brunson a special committee to make preparations for a public opening on November 3, 1925. This committee was instructed to make provision for a great public dedication on that day, and to unite with the Librarian in an effort to procure Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, President of the University of Virginia, as the orator of the occasion.