

The 1910 meeting in Davenport featured a number of sessions jointly sponsored with the Illinois Library Association, which was meeting across the Mississippi River in Rock Island. Before joining their Illinois colleagues, Iowa librarians heard ALA Secretary Chalmers Hadley discuss the role of state associations. They recommended that Hadley's request for action regarding affiliation of state associations with ALA be considered at the next meeting of each.

At a joint session on children's classics, Ruth Gatch, of the Public Library of Des Moines, reviewed a number of editions of *Robinson Crusoe*, warning against those which moralized and Edna Lyman, Advisory Children's Librarian of the Iowa State Library Commission, reported that most of the ninety editions of *Arabian Nights* which she had studied lacked authentic oriental atmosphere. The joint sessions tended toward literary subjects throughout the meeting and on the final afternoon, A. D. Ficke, of Davenport, read from the works of a number of contemporary poets including A. E. Housman, Edwin Arlington Robinson and William Butler Yeats.

At the 1911 meeting in Mason City, New York State Library Director and former ALA President James I. Wyer, Jr. addressed an audience which included his brother, ILA President and University of Iowa Librarian Malcolm G. Wyer, on "What Americans Read." Although he was optimistic that the public would one day turn to libraries for guidance in their reading, he observed that the most read magazines, newspapers and books were almost unknown to librarians.

A Round Table on Library Work With Children began with a lively debate on "Distinction Between Stories for Boys and Stories for Girls." Edna Lyman argued:

Children should be made to realize that they are a part of humanity and not simply belonging to one sex or the other. While there is the masculine as well as the feminine there is no need to magnify distinction in literature. Good books for boys should be enjoyed by girls and good books for girls should be enjoyed by boys.

Changing attitudes regarding many social issues are reflected in accounts of ILA activities throughout 1912. Among books reviewed at the North West District meeting at Storm Lake was Dorr's *What 8,000,000 Women Want*, while a book review session at the annual meeting in Nevada considered Booker T. Wash-

ington's *Man Farthest Down*.

Sioux City Librarian Jeannette M. Drake called on librarians to cooperate with social workers and "to lend a more efficient hand to the struggle for social justice," while Flora Dunlap, Head of the Roadside Settlement in Des Moines, challenged librarians to encourage reading among the youth of the settlements to reduce their interest in "moving picture shows, cheap theaters, dance and pool halls." The Nevada meeting was somewhat unusual in that local families housed the record-breaking attendance in their homes because hotel space was so limited.

Program topics for the 1913 district meetings were selected in each district from a list prepared by an ILA committee. Several chose to address the question "Shall books on social hygiene and social purity be on the shelves of our libraries?" Another topic chosen at several of the meeting sites was discussion of non-fiction books of the previous year. The choice of titles such as Jane Addams's *Twenty Years At Hull House* at the Emmetsburg meeting and Jessie Wallace's *American Socialism of the Present Day* at the Osceola meeting reflect a continuing interest in the changes taking place in American society.

The 1913 annual meeting convened in Sioux City, where the public library had just moved into its new building. The program included an address by Florence E. Ward, of the State Teacher's College at Cedar Falls, describing the relatively new Montessori method of education and explaining how it might be applied to library work with children.

The President's Address by Kate T. Loomis, a trustee of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, on "The Library Problem and the Trustee's Responsibility," certainly must have gotten the attention of her fellow trustees. Describing the lack of understanding of library issues among legislators she had encountered during the year, she wondered:

What of the library trustees in these respective men's towns; were they enjoying extended vacations, or taking much needed time for rest from labor? Surely it was part of a trustee's business to see that the legislator from his home town was an educated person at least along library lines.

District meeting program topics provided by ILA again sparked spirited discussions at the 1914 meetings. At

the Middle-east District meeting in Maquoketa, attendees agreed "that the public library was not justified in crippling its own work to supply the demands of the schools," and heard Miss Marks, of the State Library Commission, recommend discarding all public documents except the most useful.

The first echoes of the distant war in Europe reached the 1914 silver anniversary meeting in Marshalltown. Dr. Clarke, of Waterloo, spoke on the influence of libraries on the peace movement.

The 1915 annual meeting was the first of two to be held consecutively at Hotel Colfax, a rural resort on 140 acres outside of Colfax, twenty-four miles east of Des Moines. President L. L. Dickerson, Librarian of Grinnell College, explained in advance publicity that:

It has always seemed to me that an ideal place for a state meeting would be one where interest in the program would not be divided with shopping, sight-seeing and a score of diversions which are inevitable when librarians are scattered throughout a strange town.

In his President's Address on "The Library and a Changing Iowa," Dickerson noted that despite the increasing interest in industrialization and urbanization, 49 percent of the population remained rural. He cited a 1.6 percent rate of illiteracy in rural areas of Iowa and a slightly higher rate of 1.8 percent in cities. His extensive coverage of three township surveys conducted by the University of Iowa included findings that farmers, i.e. farm men, "are not inclined to read books," but that farm women "are almost universally readers."



HOTEL COLFAX AND MINERAL SPRINGS  
COLFAX, IOWA, U. S. A.

*Hotel Colfax, Colfax  
Site of 1915 and 1916 Annual Meetings*

He noted that:

The social movement during the past decade found one of its greatest advertising means in the public library and the literature distributed from the library. That is the type of reading which least has come to the rural community. In a preparation of the rural mind for the readjustments which are coming about, the library can certainly have a remarkable power.

The Victor Animatograph Company, of Davenport, demonstrated moving pictures on the Wednesday evening of the meeting, leading into a discussion of the feasibility of their use in libraries.

C. E. Rush, of the Public Library of Des Moines, opened the 1916 annual meeting with a lecture on "Illustrators of Children's Books" accompanied by lantern slides. He proclaimed that:

The funny newspaper page with its distorted and hideous pictures will have no appeal to the child who has grown up with Kate Greenaway, Caldecott, Boutet de Monvel and their fellow illustrators.

A Round Table for large libraries determined that "the circulation per capita increased as the per cent [of budget] for salaries approached fifty"; that most large libraries were open forty-two hours per week; and that most allowed one seven-day fiction item, two novels, and unlimited 'classed' books to be checked out at a time. Some permitted political organizations to use meeting rooms free and some charged a small fee, while one prohibited use entirely. One prohibited children from borrowing books from the adult department, but most allowed it.

The 1917 district meetings focused on library publicity. It was reported that the library in Mason City had arranged to enclose flyers with water bills and had hosted a booth at the North Iowa Fair while the library in Dubuque was promoted by slides shown in local moving picture theaters. The Southwest District meeting at Corning on May 4 also included discussion of the role of the library in the war, which the United States had entered on April 6.

By the time of the annual meeting in Iowa City in October, the war occupied much of the program. University of Iowa President W. A. Jessup spoke of:



the duty of the library as well as of the school to help particular groups of seekers to find their places in the great movement now in progress, the reorganization of the world: to help all to read intelligently along lines of serious interests and to do our bit towards elimination of prejudice and ignorance as to the present world war.

Forrest B. Spaulding, Librarian of the Public Library of Des Moines, presented a paper on "War Service for Libraries," reviewing efforts underway and calling for further action by the libraries of Iowa. A contribution of fifty dollars to the Library War Fund for soldiers' libraries was approved at the business meeting, following a break to allow members to hear William Jennings Bryan, in town to lecture on prohibition.

Although several topics were announced for the 1918 district meetings, "War Work" virtually monopolized the programs. Commission Secretary Julia A. Robinson urged libraries to promote food conservation, displaying a basket of potatoes and an empty flour sack with a sign which read "Eat Potatoes; Save the Wheat for Our Allies." A program on local history suggested documenting the local war effort and compiling the records of local soldiers.

That intellectual freedom had not yet become an important principle of librarianship was amply demonstrated at these 1918 district meetings: a list of books determined to be pro-German and therefore to be withdrawn was circulated at each meeting. Some Iowa librarians went even further; Mary E. Wheelock, Director of the Eldora Public Library, wrote to the chair of the Iowa Council of National Defense that "during the past summer and fall we had a number of pro-German

books donated, but I burned them as they came." This was merely a small part of a widespread campaign waged against Germans in Iowa throughout the war. Historian Nancy Derr has described the extent of anti-German acts:

German language instruction was forbidden in public schools, followed by a spate of book burnings. Communities forced parochial schools to close and then outlawed church services in German. People speaking German on the street were attacked and rebuked. German-Americans began to Anglicize or change their names. Most German-language newspapers had to close their offices. Finally, in May, 1918 Governor Harding gave prejudice the force of law and forbade the public use not only of German, but of any "foreign" language.

The 1918 annual meeting was originally scheduled to be held in Waterloo. During the summer, so many members requested that it be relocated to Des Moines to permit tours of the libraries at Camp Dodge and Fort Des Moines that the change was made. The requested tours were arranged and librarians were asked to send photos of their local library war efforts for a statewide display. All of the planning was rendered moot, however, when a three-week quarantine of Des Moines caused by an influenza epidemic forced the cancellation of the meeting.

Association activities resumed with district meetings in 1919, although only four meetings were held. Sessions on vocational work with soldiers and Americanization through public libraries were held at each loca-



*Camp Library, Camp Dodge, ca. 1918*

tion. Historian Haynes McMullen has defined Americanization as "insuring the loyalty of the foreign-born population through the teaching of English and citizenship." The effort was a response to the alarming discoveries that "about a fourth of the male population old enough to vote was born abroad and that fewer than half of these foreign-born men had become citizens."

By the time of the annual meeting in Waterloo, however, the Association was getting on with other business. The only mention of the recent war was by Mrs. F. E. Whitley, chair of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense, who commended the war efforts of Iowa's librarians.

The big news for ILA at the end of this tumultuous decade was the adoption of a plan of certification for librarians. Following lengthy debate, the membership approved a plan that placed administration of the voluntary program in the hands of a board consisting of the chair and the secretary of the Iowa Library Commission, a trustee, a librarian, and a library assistant. Varying levels of education and experience qualified applicants for Grade A, a life certificate; Grade B, a five-year certificate; Grade C, a three-year certificate; or Grade D, a one-year certificate.



A resolution passed at the Middlewest District meeting at Missouri Valley on April 30, 1920, called upon the Legislative Committee to recommend changes in Iowa law to encourage the development of county libraries. By the time of the annual meeting in Des Moines, the dedication of a full symposium to the topic reflected the growing interest of Iowa librarians, who could also hear Carl Sandburg read from his poems at this meeting.

The Legislative Committee was successful in having a county library bill, Senate File 445, introduced in the Thirty-ninth General Assembly, but the Senate Library Committee buried it. The defeat seems only to have hardened the resolve of the library community of the state. Among those offering stirring calls to action on behalf of county libraries at the 1921 annual meeting in Ames were President C. W. Sumner, Librarian of the Sioux City Public Library; Commission Secretary Julia A. Robinson; and ALA Secretary Carl H. Milam. Attendees also passed a resolution expressing to President Warren G. Harding the Association's hopes for a successful disarmament conference.

On November 5, 1920, a meeting of school librarians was held at the Public Library of Des Moines, in conjunction with the annual conference of the Iowa State Teachers' Association. Annual meetings of school librarians continued to be held through 1935, when the group formally organized as the Library Section of the Teachers' Association. The Library Section would become the Iowa Association of School Librarians in 1953, which became the Iowa School Library Media Association in 1971, which itself merged with the Audiovisual Education Association of Iowa in 1972 to form the Iowa Educational Media Association (IEMA).

Professor A. B. Noble, of the Department of English at Iowa State College, delivered an unusually impassioned plea for librarians to provide guidance to young readers. After analyzing Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes* and finding it to be "utterly preposterous, mere bosh," he likened such books to dramshops, "intoxicating their readers while they linger there, and weakening their power to reflect and to reason." He applauded the triumph of Prohibition, then implored:

Are we librarians and teachers of English, who probably understand better than do others the truth about intoxicating books, nerved to wage unceasing warfare against the literary dramshops of today?

The reading of adults also continued to be of concern

to some, and a discussion at the Round Table for Small Libraries focused on "How May We Increase the Total Circulation and at the Same Time Lessen the Percentage of Fiction Circulated?"

The county library issue was discussed at each of the 1922 district meetings, including a special meeting in Davenport on February 16 of the Southeast and Middle-East Districts joined by librarians from nearby communities in Illinois.

A resort on Clear Lake was being considered to host the 1922 annual meeting, in the spirit of the successful Colfax meetings, but the hotel burned down. The meeting was held at Cedar Rapids and again focused on county libraries. After Iowa Farm Bureau attorney J. G. Mitchell's address on the subject, members adopted former President C. W. Sumner's resolution endorsing county libraries for Iowa and calling on the Farm Bureau to help secure the necessary legislation.

In an address on "The Campaign Against Illiteracy," Cora Wilson Stewart, of Kentucky, somewhat optimistically announced that: "It is easy to eradicate illiteracy, first because illiterates are anxious to learn and second because they are easy to teach." She also shared that the slogan of the campaign was the hopeful "No Illiterates in 1930."

The 1923 Northeast District meeting at Independence turned its attention to the perennial subject of fiction but took a novel approach. The meeting adopted a resolution recommending that the Association "urge the editors of the ALA *Booklist* to make more definite their description of present day fiction and their recommendations concerning its purchase."

At about the same time, the ALA Council passed a resolution stating:

That the American Library Association has viewed with great interest the growth of the county library system and wishes to express its belief that the county is a logical unit of library service for most parts of the United States, and that the county library system is the solution of the library problem for county districts.

Gratia A. Countryman, Librarian of the Minneapolis Public Library and County Librarian for Hennepin County, shared her enthusiasm for county library work at the annual meeting at Fort Dodge, where the first Round Table for Medium Libraries discussed the steps to be



1924 District Meeting, Sioux City Public Library

taken to establish a county library.

This meeting also approved the first change in dues structure in the thirty-four year history of the Association. Although individual dues remained at \$1.00 per year, a new type of membership was established for libraries. Payment of an annual fee, varying from \$2.50 to \$10.00 by size and type of library, secured voting privileges for a trustee, a librarian, and an assistant librarian from each member library.

Ten new public librarian certificates were issued at a meeting of the Certification Board on March 7, 1924, bringing the total number issued to a modest nineteen. The writer of an announcement in the *Iowa Library Quarterly* bristled at the suggestion by a speaker at the Illinois Library Association conference the previous year that Iowa's certification program had produced few results, arguing that more time would be needed for a fair trial.

Albia Librarian Laura Duncan articulated one of the earliest recorded statements made on intellectual freedom at an Association event at the Southeast District Meeting in Centerville. Calling on librarians to "allow the reader to work out his own destiny," Duncan argued that "a citizen pays his money for the books he wishes to read and it is outside the jurisdiction of the librarian and the library board to tell him what he ought to read."

The 1924 annual meeting in Boone opened to the strains of the "Corn Song" and featured an unusual emphasis on music. Fannie R. Buchanan, representative of the Victor Talking Machine Company, encouraged libraries to develop adult music education programs emphasizing such American forms as "negro spirituals" and cowboy music. The "Folklore and Songs of Chaldea" was the topic of a lecture given by

Sheik Rafel Emmanuel of Mesopotamia, who wore native costume.

The *Iowa Library Quarterly* report on the 1925 district meetings noted that:

In the past it has been desirable to hold the meetings at good railroad centers accessible in various directions, but with good roads, automobile and bus service, this consideration need not in the future enter into the selection of the places for holding the meetings.

The variety of approaches to nonresident borrowers led to lively discussion at each of the 1925 meetings. A consensus emerged in favor of charging a fee "sufficient to exceed the tax levy for a county library" so as not to undermine the campaign for the county levies.

The annual meeting was held at Sioux City in conjunction with an ALA regional meeting for Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Characterizing county libraries as "the most important problem before librarians today," Commission Secretary Julia A. Robinson called on ILA to spend its year-end surplus on a concentrated effort to establish a county library in a single county. Members approved placing \$300 at the discretion of the Executive Board for county library work.

Each of the 1926 district meetings approved a motion to purchase a car to be used in county library demonstration work using the 1925 surplus of \$300 plus another \$300 expected to be saved on annual meeting expenses in Iowa City due to the generosity of the University of Iowa.



To avoid a conflict with the ALA Conference at Atlantic City in October, the annual meeting in Iowa City was scheduled for July, during the Iowa Summer Library School. Students and staff of the Summer School contributed to a record attendance and also made up the cast of "Why Not," a play dramatizing the arguments for and against county libraries.

After the production, the new Book Caravan, the county library demonstration car, was unveiled. Its yellow custom body by Kratzer Carriage Company rested on a Chevrolet chassis. At a business meeting in the Senate Chamber of the Old Capitol, members voted to christen the car 'Miss Lydia' in honor of Lydia M. Barrette, Mason City librarian and chair of the County Library Committee.

Through the summer and early autumn, 'Miss Lydia' visited many Iowa counties and appeared at a number of conventions and fairs across the state, attracting considerable attention:

'How can I get a book from the book wagon?' was the cry heard from many bare-footed youngsters who were ready to greet the car as it traveled through the towns. Farmers came out to ask questions and to admire, and called for their wives to look at the books. In many places books were loaned, especially to children. The minister at Le Clair said that all the boys should have a book and he would see that they came back to the library. The bakery did the same at Dixon.

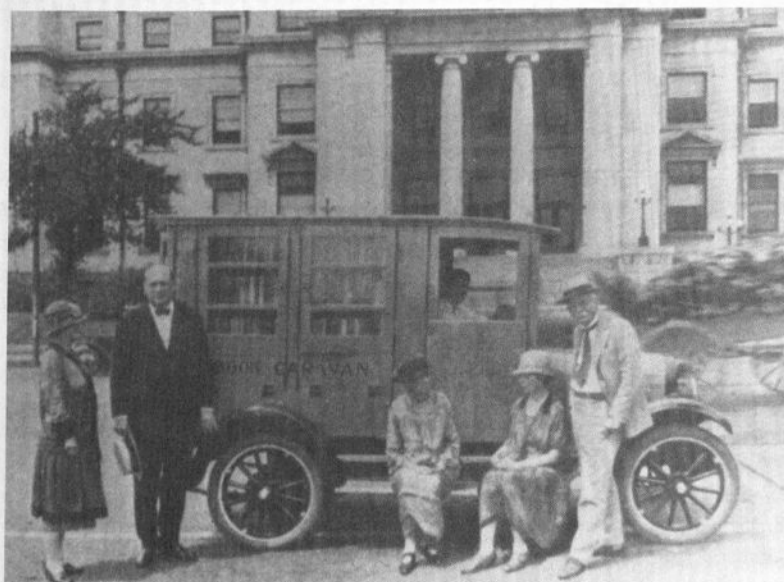
Bad weather limited travel during September and October

and, after neighboring states declined the opportunity to rent the car, it was stored for the winter.

A busy schedule the following spring included an appearance at the National Social Workers Conference in Des Moines and a week's tour of Clinton County at the end of May, during which 'Miss Lydia' had to be pulled from the mud twice. The \$25 charge and requirement that room and board be provided for the driver and a garage be made available for the car appears to have been prohibitive for many communities, as an *Iowa Library Quarterly* announcement recommended soliciting funds from local chambers of commerce and women's clubs. The expense and the lack of tangible results in the form of county libraries may have contributed to a significant drop in demand during the summer of 1927.

Interest in county libraries intensified, however, and at the Central District meeting at Newton, Grace Hill of Ames confidently forecast "county libraries in Iowa are coming - that is a safe prediction." She was puzzled, however, by the fact that Iowa still did not have a single county library after many years of Association effort, declaring that "the wonder is that they are so slow in coming, for to us it seems such an obvious and such a comparatively inexpensive thing."

State Librarian Johnson Brigham, serving a second term as president twenty-four years after his first, returned to a favorite theme in his address at the 1927 annual meeting in Des Moines on "The Librarian's Ever-present Problem - Fiction." Several speakers took time to criticize the national obsession with jazz, as well. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, who would receive the 1928 Newbery Medal for *Gay-neck*, deviated somewhat from his subject, "Truth about Kipling's India," to



Iowa Book Caravan, ca. 1927. Johnson Brigham is standing at right

suggest that jazz, moving pictures, and crime stories were damaging to youth and to note that American movies were prohibited by law in India.

Iowa State College Librarian Charles H. Brown and Iowa State staff members presented his play, "Discords," which:

gave a picture of an American family group where books had found no place and jazz radio was the only entertainment for the family. A happy ending came through the assistance of one of the group in bringing interesting reading to the children and the "conversion" of the father to the need of reading as a background for the children's education.

Mrs. Frederick W. Weitz of Des Moines was elected chair of the Trustees Roundtable, which passed a resolution requesting that the Executive Board select a speaker at each annual meeting to address trustee concerns.

The campaign for county libraries continued as the County Library Committee sent out newsletters on activities around the state throughout 1928. The district meetings again reviewed nonresident fees and again concluded that larger fees "might promote county library progress."

The county library issue also received much attention at the annual meeting in Marshalltown. In a review of her fifteen years as Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission, Julia Robinson noted that the number of public libraries in the state had increased from 112 to 165, but she regretted that the increase had been "in the smaller communities which could be much better served as branches of county libraries."

The *Iowa Library Quarterly* report on the meeting acknowledged that "progress in library extension through county and smaller units has not been striking" and recorded that the County Library Committee was directed to sell the two-year old book car. The year-end Committee report, however, called for redoubled effort and offered a series of recommendations for continuing the fight.

Beginning in 1928, Station WOI, the radio station at Iowa State College in Ames, experimented with reading entire books on its three-year old book review program every morning at nine o'clock. The books were selected by library staff, who found that the most popular were books about Iowa and the Middle West, love stories, pioneer stories, and biographies. This



*Johnson Brigham, President 1903, 1927*

creative effort to extend access to literature to rural Iowans was quite popular. One listener wrote:

When nine o'clock comes I take my mending and sewing, sometimes peel my potatoes, and sit down and look forward with the greatest of pleasure to that half-hour of reading. One of my boys has a paper route, and on Saturday mornings when he collects for it he finds almost all the ladies on the route listening to the reading.

The Legislative Committee was successful in securing introduction of Senate File 144, a bill for a new county library law, early in the 1929 legislative session. Complaints from librarians opposed to the bill forced its withdrawal and revision, however. As Senate File 260, the bill was defeated 26 to 19. Committee Secretary Forrest B. Spaulding, Director of the Public Library of Des Moines, reported that "with the exception of Senator Clark of Linn County no senators from districts comprising cities having larger public libraries voted against the bill."

The conflict that was emerging within the library community was stated explicitly as the topic of a district meeting program that surely generated much interest: "Small Towns vs. Rural Extension Branches." The *Iowa Library Quarterly* reported that:

The difficulty lies in persuading these small towns that although their library income may be but \$100 or \$200 it will be better expended as a branch library than in maintaining an independent library.

At the 1929 annual meeting in Des Moines, Commis-



sion Secretary Julia R. Robinson called for "establishment of more extension branches of larger libraries, rather than of many small individual libraries." The meeting adopted the following recommendations, escalating the campaign for county libraries to a new high:

1. We recommend that the Iowa Library Association formally go on record as approving a demonstration of county library service in some county in Iowa during the coming year.
2. That Black Hawk county be chosen as the county in which the demonstration shall be held and that \$600.00 be appropriated from this county.
3. That the Iowa Library Association appropriate \$800.00 for this work, \$500.00 to be paid out of funds set aside this coming year, 1929-30, and a pledge of \$300.00 to be paid out of funds of the following year, 1930-31, unless in the opinion of the Executive Board the conditions of the treasury will not permit such appropriation.
4. That the Iowa Library Association send a request to the American Library Association for a generous donation for this piece of work.
5. That every librarian in Iowa and as many trustees as can be interested be asked to contribute \$1.00.
6. That the Iowa Library Commission be sent a letter expressing grateful acceptance of their offer of 1,000 books and a librarian to take charge of the work.
7. That the book wagon be retained and turned over to the county for this work.
8. That every librarian run a column in her local and county papers throughout the entire demonstration, reporting progress of the work and featuring an educational campaign for county libraries.
9. That work on legislative changes in the county library law be started at an early date.

10. That the libraries be requested to make small loans to be exchanged periodically, to the county undertaking the county demonstration.

11. That the chairman of the county library committee be allowed funds for stenographic work, if in the opinion of the Executive Board conditions of the treasury permit such appropriation.

To raise additional funds for the demonstration project, the Association immediately launched an aggressive campaign to achieve one thousand paid two-year memberships. As the stock market crash of October signalled the beginning of the worst depression in the nation's history, the Iowa Library Association began the second decade of its campaign for county libraries with a sense of renewed purpose.