NEW SCLA OFFICERS

Charles Stow (left), Greenville Public Library, President; Miss Jessie Ham, University of South Carolina Library, Secretary; Mrs. Marguerite G. Thompson, Colleton County Librarian, Treasurer; Miss Madeleine Mosimann, Murray Vocational School, Charleston, Vice President and President Elect; and Robert C. Tucker, Furman University Library, Outgoing President.

The Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention of the South Carolina Library Association was held at the Clemson House, Clemson, South Carolina, October 25-27. John Goodman of the Clemson Library staff was in charge of local arrangements.

A Pre-Conference SCLA Executive Board meeting was held on Thursday night, October 25. The First General Session, which President Robert C. Tucker called to order at 11 a.m. on Friday, featured an address by Dr. G. Watts Cunningham, Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School of Cornell University.

The annual business session of the Trustee Section of the Association was held at a luncheon meeting on Friday. Other Section Meetings occupied the afternoon program. A report on the activities of each Section is included in this issue.

An afternoon tea at the Clemson House at 4:30 was followed by a walking tour of the Clemson campus.

Banquet

Dr. R. F. Poole, President of Clemson College, welcomed the Convention at the banquet on Friday evening. Mr. Tucker introduced the speaker of the evening, Dr. D. H. Gilpatrick, Head of the History Department of Furman University, whose subject was "Two Centennials, 1956." Dr. Gilpatrick sketched rapidly and vividly important events in politics and world affairs which took place in or about 1856. Among these were the founding of the Republican Party, the election of James Buchanan, and the patenting of Watt's steam engine and Arkwright's loom, both of which greatly influenced industry in England and America.

The other centennial to which the speaker referred was of far-reaching consequence in our cultural development — the founding in Boston in 1856 of the first public library. In his witty excursion backwards for one hundred years, Dr. Gilpatrick also commented on the flourishing of Herman Melville — and even Horatio Alger — and the founding of such magazines as Harper's and The Atlantic Monthly.

Officers Elected

At the business meeting on Saturday morning, Charles E. Stow, librarian of the Greenville Public Library, was elected president of the Association.

Other new officers include Miss Madeleine Mosimann, librarian at the Murray High School, Charleston, vice president; Miss Jessie Ham of the University of South Carolina Library, secretary; and Mrs. Marguerite G. Thompson, Colleton County Library, treasurer.

Miss Emily Sanders of the Charleston Free Library was named South Carolina representative on the American Library Association's Council, and Herbert Hucks, Jr., Wofford College librarian, was elected to serve as Southeastern Library Association representative.

The Association's 35th annual convention adjourned on Saturday after an address by Dr. Lawrence Clark Powell, librarian of the University of California at Los Angeles. The text of Dr. Powell's address, "The Gift to be Simple," will be included in the next issue of The South Carolina Librarian.
NEW SCLA MEMBERS

Among the 136 who attended the convention at Clemson, seventeen joined the Association at that time. SCLA welcomes the following new members:

Mrs. William S. Bridges, Hughes Junior High School, Greenville
Miss Sara Belle Brooks, Laurens High School, Laurens
Mrs. Betty Daly, Anderson Public Library, Anderson
Mrs. H. E. DePass, Jr., Park Hill School, Spartanburg
Mrs. Ruth Holcombe, Spartanburg Public Library, Spartanburg
Mr. George Linder, Spartanburg Public Library, Spartanburg
Miss Agnes Adger Mansfield, Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood
Miss Faye J. Mitchell, Clemson College Library, Clemson
Miss Denyse Mosimann, Charleston Library Society, Charleston
Mrs. Martha Norment, Spartanburg Public Library, Spartanburg
Mrs. Legare Padgett, Hickory Tavern School, Gray Court
Mrs. Naomi Phillips, Spartanburg Public Library, Spartanburg
Miss Frances Jane Porter, Chester Public Library, Chester
Miss Sybil Price, Spartanburg Public Library
Miss Emma M. Ritter, Berkeley County Library, Moncks Corner
Miss Connie Shockley, Spartanburg Public Library
Mrs. Mary C. Thomason, Travelers Rest High School, Travelers Rest.

CONVENTION VISITORS

Three neighboring states were represented at one or more sessions of the convention at Clemson. Visiting librarians included:

Miss Kent Seagle, Henderson County Library, Hendersonville, North Carolina
Mr. David E. Estes, Emory University Library, Atlanta, Georgia
Mr. John David Marshall, Reference Librarian, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama

It is encouraging to note that librarians are being consulted in regard to plans for new school buildings. In Columbia, a committee consisting of Mrs. Grace Quattlebaum, Mrs. Betty Foran, and Mrs. Anna King, has been appointed to make recommendations for the library in a new junior high school.

Books-On-Exhibit, a traveling display of 500 outstanding juvenile titles, will be displayed in a number of South Carolina schools in the course of the year. The exhibit will have its first showing at Darlington Elementary School during Book Week.

Nichols Public Library Is Dedicated

The Nichols Public Library was dedicated and officially opened to the public on Sunday, October 7.

The invocation was given by the Rev. James E. Porter, pastor of the Baptist Church. Guests were welcomed by Mrs. W. B. Phillips, president of the American Legion Auxiliary.

W. R. Griffith, Commander of American Legion Post 82, which along with the local Auxiliary sponsors the library, presented the building to the citizens. This was followed by an acceptance speech by Mayor W. G. Norman, who gave a brief history of the development of the library.

Miss Chandler Married In October

The marriage of Miss Genevieve Wilcox Chandler, Georgetown County Librarian for three years, to William George Peterkin, Jr., son of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, took place in Georgetown on October 15.

Mrs. Peterkin graduated from Coker College and received her library science degree from the University of North Carolina.
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

With this first issue of The South Carolina Librarian, the South Carolina Library Association launches upon a new publication venture under the capable editorship of Mr. J. B. Howell of the Clemson College Library staff. From January, 1945, to May, 1956, your Association jointly with the South Carolina State Library Board published the South Carolina Library Bulletin, first under the editorship of Miss Nancy C. Blair and then—for ten years—Miss Estellene P. Walker. The Bulletin served SCLA well during those years, and we are grateful for the faithful work done by the two Executive Secretaries of the Library Board and their staff members. But the members of your Executive Committee feel that the time has come for SCLA to strike out on its own. Whether this effort succeeds will depend in large measure upon the assistance the membership gives the editor. Send him news items and articles, remembering that an editor is limited by the space available to him if he finds it necessary to cut or even omit the material you send him. When the publication is well established, we hope it will become a quarterly. For the time being, it will be a semi-annual.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find reports on the convention recently held at Clemson and one or more of the addresses given there. You missed a good meeting if you did not get to Clemson. Mr. Charles Stow and his Program Committee secured three excellent speakers for us, and Mr. John Goodman and his Local Arrangements Committee planned so well that we found Clemson House a delightful place to meet. Many others gave invaluable assistance, not only with the convention, but with the work of the Association throughout the year. To all who helped make this year a successful one in the history of SCLA, I wish to express my sincere appreciation.

—Robert C. Tucker

The Orangeburg County Library is providing a new service—the supplying of color films for program material to clubs and organizations in the city and county.

The Greenwood City and County Library has secured a downtown location for the erection of its new public library building. The site was formerly occupied by the First Baptist Church of Greenwood.

Two important changes in certification of school librarians have been approved by the State Board of Education. The requirement of twelve semester hours of library science for teacher-librarians has been raised to eighteen. Practice teaching in a subject field or in an elementary grade may be substituted for practice work in a school library.

TRUSTEE SECTION REPORT

The annual business session of the Trustee Section was held at the luncheon meeting on Friday, October 26. Mrs. Shaw Scott, Mayesville, Acting Chairman of the Trustee Section, presided over the meeting which was attended by fifteen trustees and one member of the State Library Board.

Mrs. W. L. Norton, trustee of the Library, read the minutes of the 1955 meeting. A report from the nominating committee, made by Mr. L. C. Berry of the Chester County Library, recommended Mrs. Betty Hinton of Cherokee County as chairman and Mrs. John Smith of Spartanburg as vice-chairman and secretary. The nominations were seconded and the slate elected by acclamation.

Miss Estellene Walker, Director of the State Library Board, asked that the Trustee Section go on record, recommending that the Standards for Public Libraries passed by the Public Library Section in 1955 be studied by every Board of Public Library Trustees in South Carolina. The motion for this recommendation was made, seconded and carried.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Miss Lois Barbee, A.L.A. Coordinator, who gave background information on the Library Service Bill and indicated bases on which libraries could qualify for federal aid.

Mrs. Margaret G. Thompson, Colleton County Librarian, discussed “Personnel Classification and Salary Schedule for South Carolina Public Libraries.”

PUBLIC LIBRARY SECTION MEETING

Miss Dorothy Smith of the Horry County Memorial Library, presided at the Public Library Section of the South Carolina Library Association which met on Friday afternoon, October 26. Miss Josephine Crouch, Aiken County Public Library, was secretary and Miss Georgie Adams, Orangeburg County Free Library, parliamentarian.

Mrs. Margaret G. Thompson, Colleton County Library, Chairman of the Personnel Study Committee, introduced Miss Margaret Mosimann, Charleston Free Library, who presented the report of the Committee. Since this study of job analyses, personnel classification and salary standards for public libraries required detailed surveys, it was requested that an additional year be allowed the same committee to complete their recommendations.

Mr. Charles E. Stow of the Greenville Public Library proposed that the State Library Board be requested to investigate a certification program for South Carolina librarians.

Miss Lois Barbee of the State Library Board, serving as moderator for a discussion of the Library Services Act, gave a brief resume of the ten-year history of the Act which was finally signed by President Eisenhower in June, 1956. Miss Estellene P. Walker, Director of the State Library Board, presented a tentative plan for the implementation of the Act in South Carolina. Mr. George Linder, Spartanburg County Library, suggested that the South Carolina Library Association recommend that a bill be passed by the South Carolina Legislature establishing legal responsibility on the part of library users.

Officers for the coming year are Miss Josephine Crouch, Chairman, and Miss Margaret Mosimann, Secretary.
CHARLESTON LIBRARY SOCIETY

by Virginia Rugheimer

(First in a series of articles on Interesting Libraries of South Carolina, the following is, with a few deletions, a reprint of an article which appeared in The Southeastern Librarian, Winter, 1955.)

Two hundred and seven years ago, when the Lion and the Unicorn decorated the masthead of the South Carolina Gazette (a newspaper already sixteen years old), and indigo, South Carolina's second great staple crop, was being vigorously encouraged to compensate for the low market price of rice, seventeen young men of Charleston following various trades and professions associated themselves for the purpose of importing current pamphlets and magazines from England.

As was proper in a new country and indicative of the future democratic character of the association, the young men represented all groups of society. They included among their number a schoolmaster, two planters, a peruke maker, a doctor, a printer, two lawyers, and nine merchants.

On December 28, 1748, the original seventeen with the addition of two or more young men, organized themselves as a library society and arranged to import books as well as magazines and pamphlets. In April, 1749, they elected as president, John Cooper, merchant and distiller; and as librarian, John Sinclair, merchant and Quaker. The collection was housed, as was the custom of the day, in the home of the librarian.

In April 1750, the rules were published, 129 members were listed, and the intention of the membership to erect a library building and raise funds for an academy was announced.

Although the library was to have a number of homes, a library building constructed as such was not to become an actuality until 1914, one hundred and fifty-seven years after its organization. In 1755, when John Sinclair resigned and William Henderson, Master of the Free School, became librarian, the books were removed to the Free School in Broad Street, where the library hours were from twelve to one daily, except on Thursday, when they were from three to five.

In the meantime the library found itself in difficulties as the rules, having no legal sanction, had been little regarded, and every effort was bent toward obtaining a charter of incorporation. In 1754 the charter was sent to England for the royal assent. With unusual speed the Lords Justices ratified and confirmed the charter only to have it captured on its return voyage by the French, then at war with the English. This disaster proved almost fatal to the Society but, finally eighteen months later, a charter was delivered.

The possession of the royal charter amply justified the trouble it had caused, and the Library Society entered its prosperous pre-Revolutionary existence. At the annual meeting in 1758 Governor Lyttleton was elected president, and the organization was reported to be in a healthy financial condition.

The season of prosperity was to be a short one, however, for the Revolutionary War suspended all plans for improvement. The Society, nevertheless, not only weathered the war but recovered from a fire which in 1775 had practically wiped out the collection. Of the 5,000 volumes owned by the Library Society, all but 185 were destroyed.

Among the volumes preserved are three dictionaries: Pierre Bayle's General Dictionary, 1734; Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language, 1755; P. Miller's The Gardener's Dictionary, 1752, and the minutes and journal of the Society.

In 1803 recovery was again in full swing. The membership was substantial. John Davidson was librarian and General Charles Coatsworth Pinckney was president.

The Library, housed on the upper floor of the "new" court house, already ten years old, had a collection of approximately four thousand books. The arrangement of the volumes was, as judged by modern standards, rather amazing. According to the custom of the time, they were placed on the shelves, size Octavos and "infra." were on the top, quartos on the middle shelves, and folios on the bottom.

Size, sensibly enough, was also the measure of the length of time during which a book might be kept out of the library. A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Charleston Library Society, 1811, states the following: "... which volumes they may keep as follows: If a folio, and under two hundred pages, twelve days... a quarto and under two hundred pages, ten days... Books of octavo size and under, being in connection, may be taken out in sets, provided they do not exceed five volumes in the set; in which case the first volume may be kept ten days, and the set four days for every volume, over and above the first; but if taken out in single-volumes, each volume may be kept twelve days..."

The fines for overdue, lost, or damaged books were also determined by size.

"... if any member lends, loses, or damages any book, or books, or detains any book, or books, or pamphlets, for a period in succession, longer than four months, he shall forfeit double the sterling cost thereof if folios, or quarto; and treble the sterling cost, if octavos, or under, or pamphlets; the member in such case, taking the book, or set to himself; provided, always, that members residing in the country, shall be allowed at the rate of one day, for every ten miles, between the place of his residence and Charleston, for the returning of a book, or books, after the time limited by the rules shall be expired."

Obviously IQ's must have been high among the members if they were expected to digest and follow the rules, and obviously too it was necessary for the librarian to have not only a strong back, but also a mathematical turn and a thorough knowledge of the geography of the surrounding country. And woe unto those who transgressed these and other rules, such as attendance at annual meetings, for attached to such transgression were heavy fines.

The Society was prosperous enough in 1827 to subscribe to the folio edition of The Birds of America, a set still in its possession. Printed in London during the years
1827-1838, each volume was bought as it came from the presses.

In 1835, the Library Society purchased the building at the corner of Broad and Church Streets, where it maintained its headquarters for seventy-nine years. To meet the purchase price every subscriber of $100.00 was offered, free forever from all contributions, all the privileges of membership except the right to vote and to hold office. Ninety-six gentlemen responded to this appeal, and several Charleston families still hold and use the "brick membership" obtained at this time.

In 1848, the Society celebrated its hundredth anniversary. The Honorable James Louis Petigru delivered an oration, and religious services were conducted in St. John's Lutheran Church by the Reverend John Bachman, the associate of Audubon. Dr. Thomas Y. Simons was president of the Society, and William Logan, librarian.

In 1861 war again disrupted the activities of the library, and when peace was restored the Society seemed to be on the verge of ruin. In 1870, the Apprentice's Library Society, having lost its building and most of its collection in the great fire of 1861, but with some ready cash, was reorganized and in a condition to purchase books. Application was made to the Charleston Library Society for the use of its shelves, and in 1874 the two libraries were merged. An interesting regulation, still in effect, resulting from the merger provides that each adult annual member may give a minor membership to any person under twenty-one.

In 1886 the library building was badly damaged by earthquake, but funds were raised and it was restored in the next year.

On January 1, 1899, Ellen E. FitzSimons took charge as librarian and the modern era of the Library Society was launched. Miss FitzSimons immediately began the preparation of a card catalog. Prior to this time the library had printed catalogs, the first published in 1770, the last in 1876.

In 1902, the Society acquired its first institutional member, when students of the College of Charleston, the "academy" the Library was promoting in 1750, were admitted to the privileges of membership, an arrangement which still continues.

The most obviously important events in the first half of the twentieth century concern, curiously, the dissolution of a racing club and a museum. In 1900 the famous South Carolina Jockey Club was disbanded and funds from the sale of the Washington Race Course were turned over to the Society with the provision that the income derived therefrom be spent for books. In 1942 the Supreme Court of South Carolina handed down a decision in the Ross Museum case as a result of which the Library Society was the recipient of a substantial and much needed inheritance.

In 1948, the Charleston Library Society celebrated its bicentennial and entered on its third century of service to the community. Appropriately the membership assembled and marched to St. John's Lutheran Church, where Lieutenant Colonel James G. Harrison of The Citadel faculty, delivered an address. Frederick H. Horbeck was president of the Society, and Ellen M. FitzSimons librarian. During the first two hundred years the library was administered by twenty librarians.

One cannot in a brief article attempt to list titles of rare books held by a library where so many books are rare; nevertheless, one must mention the fact that the Society owns what is probably a unique copy of the earliest extant book issued from a South Carolina press, An Essay on Currency Written in August, 1732, printed by Timothy at Charleston in 1734.

There are many Charleston imprints in the Society's holdings of pamphlets, almanacs, and city directories. The oldest of the extant almanacs published in Charleston is dated 1760, and from 1760 to 1800 the Society has about eighteen almanacs with Charleston imprints. The Charleston city directories appeared first in almanacs. The Society holds such directories for 1782 and 1785, probably the first directories published in the United States. The collection of manuscripts and transcripts is small, but includes such interesting items as the following: A contemporary copy (1669?) of John Locke's The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina; Thomas Elfe's Account book, 1768-1775; 170 manuscript pages containing eight charges delivered by Nicholas Trott, first Chief Justice of South Carolina (1703-1707), and also the manuscript of Trott's speech of condemnation of the pirates dated 1718.

Representative of a more contemporary date is the manuscript copy of DuBose Heyward's Porgy, recently on loan to the La Scala Museum in Milan where it was on exhibit, February, 1955, at the opening of the Gershwin-Heyward opera, Porgy and Bess.

The Society also has a number of interesting maps and extensive files of magazines. It owns the four complete volumes of the British Atlantic Neptune, 1777-1780, volume four of which contains maps of Charleston and the Carolina coast. The earliest of the maps of Charleston is dated 1670.

The magazine files of ante-bellum Charleston imprints are unique, and there are 120 volumes of The Gentleman's Magazine, London, 1731-1817.

The Society's newspaper holdings, however, are the particular star in its crown. Historians working with the collection have expressed the opinion that the Charleston Library Society has the most valuable file of pre-Revolutionary newspapers in the United States. The file begins with the South Carolina Gazette, 1732. Three files cover the War of 1812; two cover the period of the Confederacy. There are in all approximately 280 bound volumes of newspapers for the period before 1865. Newspapers are available from the rag paper edition of 1732 to the microfilm edition of 1955.

The Library Society has for more than two hundred years held its own through earthquake, storms, and wars and continues to serve the public over a wide area. Supported by endowment and subscription, the Society functions both as a library for the general reader and as a place of research for the scholar. At the present time the Society is located at 164 King Street, where, in its own building, it houses a collection of more than 65,000 volumes and serves an active membership of 846 members. Albert Simons is president of the Charleston Library Society.

Beginning with the fall semester, the Circulation Department of the McKissick Memorial Library of the University of South Carolina installed a new circulation system. It is the McBee Keysort system and is proving valuable in speeding up the process of circulating books and sending over-due notices.
SCHOOL SECTION REPORT

Mrs. Caroline D. Rice, librarian of Carlisle Military School at Bamberg, presided at the meeting of school librarians on October 26. A group discussion on recommendations for revision of standards for elementary school libraries was led by Mrs. Margaret T. Turner of Southside Elementary School, Spartanburg, chairman of the Committee on Revision.

In 1951 the school librarians of South Carolina adopted certain recommendations for elementary school libraries in the state. Since then the number of elementary libraries has more than doubled and their services have been broadened and extended. It seemed fitting, therefore, that these recommendations be examined and improvements be made commensurate with this recent growth. To meet this pressing need a committee composed of Mrs. Margaret Turner, Mrs. Alice P. DePass, Park Hill School, Spartanburg, and Mrs. Patsy Scott, Bradley Elementary School, Columbia, was appointed to study these recommendations as they stand today.

The group discussions of changes centered around services, qualifications of personnel, appropriations, materials and housing. It was evident that the thirty librarians present were vitally interested in working cooperatively to bring about the needed improvements. Suggestions for changes were numerous, reflecting the need for a thorough revision of the present standards.

This study, which will continue throughout the school year, will not be confined to the scrutiny of school librarians alone. Assistance from school people in every subject area in the state will be sought. Miss Nora Beust will be asked to give her opinion as to what changes might bring about improved standards. When school librarians come together again next March during the meeting of the South Carolina Education Association meeting, the result of the study will be presented. At this time further suggestions will be received from the assembled group.

In the meantime Mrs. Margaret Turner and Miss Nancy Day will welcome suggestions for improvements from one and all. Anyone wishing a copy of the 1951 recommendations may receive such by writing Miss Day. Now is the time for all school librarians to focus attention on improving standards for elementary libraries in our state.

It is hoped that when these recommendations have been thoroughly revised, they will be officially accepted as standards for the operation of elementary libraries in South Carolina.

NEW SCHOOL LIBRARIES
IN GREENVILLE COUNTY

by Mrs. Jessie Cannon,
Librarian, Greenville Junior High School

Greenville County has reason to be proud of the new junior and senior high school libraries that have come into being this fall.

The Hughes Junior High School Library looks out on a terrace with an inviting woods just beyond. The reading room, recently equipped with attractive maple furniture, seats approximately 100 students. Adjoining this are the conference room, work room, stacks for magazines and a room for storing audio-visual equipment. Shelving of varying sizes, cupboards, a clothes closet, poster cabinet, glass partitions and work space evidence careful planning. An unusual and pleasing illumination is provided by overhead skylights. Even on a cloudy day a soft, yet bright glow pervades the reading room. All this adds up to a situation which is conducive to reading for pleasure or concentrating on research problems.

Mrs. Audrey Bridges, who has organized school libraries in Miami, Florida, and Alexandria City, Alabama, is busy processing and cataloging the $1,500 worth of books ordered during the summer. She has the distinction of having started all the libraries in which she has worked thus far.

The new Carolina High School serves both the junior and senior high school students. The library has an attractive, well-lighted reading room, which accommodates about ninety students. Distinctive features of this room are the browsing nook at the rear and the sloping shelves which display a number of new magazines. The many different colors used on the walls, ceiling and floors blend so as to give a most pleasing effect. The conference room, work area and office, and the storage room are planned to give maximum service. Mrs. Margaret Mann Cromer, daughter of Dr. J. L. Mann, for many years Superintendent of the Greenville City Schools, is librarian here.

Miss Kitty Jones is organizing the library at the L. P. Hollis Junior High School. For six years previous to coming to Greenville, Miss Jones was assistant librarian in the Law Library of the Department of Justice in Washington, D. C.

Launching the library program as the San Souci Junior High School seems to be a cooperative school project. The boys in the shop, under the direction of the librarian, Mrs. Ruth Grimm, are making various articles of furniture to be used in the library. Students soon will be enjoying their attractive reading room. Mrs. Grimm, formerly librarian in the Georgetown schools, had her training in the Carnegie Library School at Pittsburgh.

S.C.H.S.L.A. SCHOLARSHIP

The first $100 scholarship provided by the South Carolina High School Library Association has been awarded to Patsy Garner Householder of the University of South Carolina. A graduate of the Kelley Pinckney School in Union County, Patsy is a senior in Secondary Education with Library Science as her teaching subject. She is now doing practice work at Dreher High School Library under the supervision of Mrs. Betty Foran and Miss Martha Jones, librarians. She hopes to continue her study of library science on the graduate level.

The purpose of the scholarships offered by the South Carolina High School Library Association is to promote recruiting of librarians for South Carolina schools.

SPECIAL SERVICE OFFERED AT
SPARTANBURG HIGH SCHOOL

by Elizabeth G. Stephens, Librarian

The Spartanburg High School Library Club has chosen as its project of the year a service that is giving student-librarians and students a great deal of pleasure. Home-room teachers have been asked to send to the library the names and addresses of students who are sick and will be absent from school for some time.

A student-librarian then volunteers to visit the sick student and take him reading material of a serious nature as well as something in a light vein. The librarian checks carefully to be sure that the illness is not contagious.

Vol. I, No. 1
ON CULTURAL READING

by G. Watts Cunningham

(Address given at Opening Session, South Carolina Library Association’s Annual Convention, October 26, 1956)

I

In Iolanthe, you will recall, Private Willis is made to observe that it is very comical

How Nature always does contrive
That every boy and every gal
That’s born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative.

Exaggeration apart, this observation adumbrates a universal characteristic of human-mindedness whether comical or otherwise. Each of us arrives at the age of discretion equipped with sundry biases, opinions and beliefs and loyalties, which constitute a very important part, and in the earlier stages perhaps the whole, of our mental furnishing; nor do we ever entirely escape them. Let us call these opinions and beliefs and loyalties by the name of ‘perspectives’; then we can say, shortly, to be minded as we human beings are minded is to be perspectively minded. There is nothing recondite about this observation; it is simply a statement of biographical fact. But it is interesting to note, by the way, that it was overlooked, with unfortunate consequences, by thinkers of the eighteenth century who built on too literal construction of John Locke’s famous reference to mind as a tabula rasa.

The genesis of these perspectives is a problem of far-reaching scope; in the end, it is the problem of how we become minded at all. Viewed in medias res, they are derived through our early training or given to us in our cradles with the first lisplings of our mother tongue; thus does individual culture merge with the culture of the group. For the present purpose, however, it is more important to note that, however derived, perspectives vary in significance for intellectual achievement by the individual. And they do so because of variation in subject-matters towards which they are oriented. Roughly speaking, those concerned with principles, with substantial matters of fact and valuations, are thus more significant than those concerned with the contingent and fortuitous, with the odds and ends of passing events and passions. This, too, is obvious, or may readily become so if we but stop to ask for the justification of the common conviction that the individual’s early training and associations are potent factors, for weal or woe, in the game of achieving a mind. In this game, at least, pushpin is not as good as poetry.

Besides perspectives, there is the capacity commonly called reasoning—the capacity, that is, to make and test hypotheses and deductions and to employ the device of means-ends in conduct. In his famous definition of man as the reasoning animal, Aristotle assumed that this capacity is the distinguishing mark of human-mindedness, and many followed him in this assumption. Nowadays, however, the assumption is held to be false; studies in animal psychology have indicated that the differentia is not as clear-cut as the assumption would have it since much can be said in support of the view that animals
other than men can also reason. But, however this may be, and the issue is at least in part a matter of terminology, there can be no doubt that the capacity of reasoning is a fundamental characteristic of human-mindedness at whatever level of competency this side of idiocy. At its lowest, it provides a modicum of organization of experiences; at its highest, it is both the open sesame to the penumbral regions of mentality and the Pilgrim's Progress into those farther reaches; and everywhere, it is that which Browning calls "the spark which disturbs our clod."

Though distinguishable, it would be a mistake to suppose that reason and perspective are logically separable. On the contrary, they are logically interdependent: without reason perspectives are blind, without perspectives reason is empty. It is true that, psychologically speaking, perspectives are sometimes blind and reasoning sometimes empty; this happens, as is too often the case, when prejudice resists argument or wishful thinking assumes the role of reason. Such behavior falls away from sound intelligence, however, and is an act of mental apostasy. In the same mind reasoning everywhere finds its point of departure and orientation in perspectives, and perspectives are always amendable to modification or even rejection at the behest of reason. This is human-mindedness at its highest stretch.

And the relativity of perspectives needs emphasis. They are not final, but tentative; points of departure, not ultimate resting places. They do indeed embody the knowledge and valuations which for the moment and under the circumstances one accepts, but they are marked by ragged edges and incompleteness and at other times and under other circumstances they may not satisfy. One need not look beyond the smoke of his own chimney, in Locke's homely metaphor, to discover that he is much more ignorant than knowing; and it requires little further reflection to suspect that penetration into the realm of that ignorance, which is the work of reason par excellence, threatens revision of what he knows and what he values. The culture of the group is full of examples of this sort of thing. Failure to note it leads inevitably into an intellectually blind alley at the end of which lies the specter of totalitarianism in its most sinister form, for this is the road to the monstrous delusion of finite infallibility—the delusion which Bertrand Russell has rightly named cosmic impiety.

Human-mindedness, then, is a process characterized by perspectives and reason, in which these two are mutually involved in the double sense that reasoning enters into the creation of perspectives and reveals their cognitive inadequacy. In principle there is no end to this progressive acquisition of perspectives and modification of them, unless and until a perspective is found which is absolute and consequently needs no revision; but an example of such a perspective would be hard to provide and there is little promise of finding one. The process develops from within outwards, the drive within and its orientation outwards, towards facts and valuations embodied in the physical and social sciences. In the process perspectives emerge and change at the behest of reason working in and through them towards their own transcendence: it may even be called changing one's mind if that is done with deliberation and not, capriciously. And this is what I here understand by the culture of the individual.

Emerson summarily expresses this in his essay on "Circles" as follows:

"The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end. The extent to which this generation of circles, wheel without wheel, will go, depends on the force or truth of the individual soul."

This passage is a vivid pictorial statement of the essential nature of human-mindedness as here conceived and is quoted for that reason. Of course, there is no intention to invoke the authority of Emerson in support of the analysis sketched above.

II

What, we now ask, is the bearing of this analysis on the question of cultural reading construed with reference to the culture of the individual? Assuming that the analysis is sound in principle and that culture is to be understood as described, what sort of reading may properly be called cultural?

The answer I propose to give to this question involves special use of two terms which must first be defined. These terms are the two verbs, 'to enrich' and 'to enlighten', taken with perspectives as their objects. As here understood, to enrich a perspective is to clarify and buttress it; to enlighten a perspective is to make it perspicacious, that is, to render it amenable to self-examination and self-criticism. A perspective is enriched when it is more closely specified or more solidly supported; it is enlightened when it is far-sighted and unbiassed. Every man who finds new proofs or achieves clearer formulation of his opinions and beliefs is thereby mentally enriched, as he is enlightened if induced to inquire into the foundations of his opinions and beliefs. To avoid misunderstanding, it should be noted that enrichment and enlightenment thus understood are only different aspects of a logically continuous achievement: enrichment leads to enlightenment when the final logical account of its implications is rendered.

In the light of this terminology I propose the following definition of cultural reading: Any reading which either enriches or enlightens the perspectives of the reader is on that account properly to be called cultural reading, since it thereby nourishes the cultural process.

Detailed justification of this definition lies in the considerations above sketched, which need not be repeated. But further clarification, and therefore enrichment, of it may be had by briefly discussing two possible objections to it.

The first is that on this definition whether or not a given book may properly be said to have cultural value depends on both what is written in the book and who happens to read what is written; if the book provides a reader with food for thought, as we say, it has cultural value and otherwise, not. This objection might be shortly put by saying that the definition makes the cultural value of a book a mathematical function of book and reader, and thus relative to the reader. The second objection concerns the scope of the definition. Within it would fall any book which teaches anybody anything, since such a book would thereby in some measure either enrich or enlighten him thus taught; and this would apparently include everything admitted to the press which is not merely fanciful or designed only for those readers who "are pleased with a feather and tickled with a straw."

I agree that these inferences are implicit in the definition, but I cannot see that they are serious objections to it. Why not, it may be asked, and what is the alternative?
Why shouldn’t the cultural value of a book be dependent on the relationship between book and reader, and where else could it reside? In the book unread? And why shouldn’t any book which embodies the fruits of intelligent inquiry be met for this relationship on appropriate occasion, and on what grounds should any be excluded? If the criteria of cultural reading are to be derived from the mentality whose culture is at issue, as the definition in question assumes, I am at a loss to see what other conclusions can be drawn. On the other side, if these criteria are to be rejected I am equally at a loss to see what other criteria are available, apart from arbitrary prescription of a special kind of subject matter.

Nevertheless, an issue of fundamental importance is adumbrated here, namely, the distinction among books in respect to their cultural significance. We commonly assume that some books are more significant for culture than others, and that some are especially significant, though we are hard put to it to say how and why this is so, or even what we mean by it. That the definition here under scrutiny has something fairly definite to say on these questions seems to me one basal consideration in support of it. And I wish briefly to indicate what that is.

Stated in the terms of the definition, the cultural significance of books varies directly with the enrichment and enlightenment they give the reader; the more they enrich and enlighten him the more culturally significant they are, the less they do so the less significant they are, and if they provide neither enrichment nor enlightenment their cultural significance is zero. This is perhaps little more than a repetition in extenso of the definition itself and hardly needs saying. Something more subtle remains to be said, however, and it concerns the distinction between our two terms “enriching” and “enlightening.”

To enrich a perspective, we have said, is to clarify and support it; to enlighten it is to render it self-critical. Thus the process of enriching leaves the perspective essentially unchanged in content, while the process of enlightening challenges it. One whose perspective is merely enriched is even more firm in his opinions and beliefs, but one whose perspective is enlightened is more hesitant in respect to them: the one has further reason to rest content in his convictions, the other his reason to put them to trial. The one is edified but intellectually at ease, the other is instructed but intellectually at risk. The one is a learner, the other a thinker.

This distinction meets us under various names in different contexts—for example, in common speech it is the distinction between narrow-mindedness or bull-headedness and open-mindedness or tolerance, and in the philosophers and the poets, it is the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. For teachers it is the distinction between learning by rote and learning to think, and it is here a matter of grave concern, sometimes of despair, to those who are convinced that the teacher’s primary function is to train pupils for the business of living as contrasted with the business of making a living. Debates in Academe about cultural education and how to achieve it, so numerous and often so futile, besride it. And it underlies the problem of the significance of cultural reading.

Its application to this problem is direct and fairly obvious. Reading which enlightens perspectives, we must say, is of special cultural significance and may be said to be cultural reading par excellence. And it is so because it aids in removing cultural blocks and keeping the cultural process an open road. As Emerson observes in the context of the passage quoted above, the well-established circles of mind tend to “solidify, and hem in life. But,” he continues, “if the soul is quick and strong, it bursts over that boundary on all sides, and expands another orbit on the great deep . . .” Any book which helps the “soul” to be thus “quick and strong” is of special cultural importance; it assists the cultural process at its most crucial and difficult moment, and consequently deserves high ranking in any bibliography of cultural reading.

III

Efforts have been made to give a list of titles of such books, and these are suggestive. It seems doubtful, however, that they are of universal application. On most of these lists Plato’s Republic, for example, would doubtless be found among the first ten or twenty; and yet such a reader as Thomas Jefferson confessed that he could find in it little more than recondite nonsense—what seemed to him “whimsies, puerilities, and unintelligible jargon”—in comparison with the “good sense” of the Romans as embodied for instance in the writings of Cicero! Any list one makes is necessarily oriented towards his own special needs and may not meet the needs of others. And this is because in the business of mind-cultivation, human mindedness being what it is, each must cultivate his own garden and discover for himself the tools appropriate for the purpose.

Despite this, however, substantial suggestions can be made to aid in the search for the tools. And I wish, in conclusion, to propose one or two.

Unfortunately, the current popularity of a book is of no great assistance in the search. That a book is among the best sellers indicates that it has many readers, of course, but little more. It will probably help to pass a pleasant hour, and it may instruct: so-and-so many thousand readers can’t be wholly wrong! But the question remains whether it will also enlighten. And its popularity may be for the cynic ground for suspicion that it will not: so-and-so many thousand readers are probably not interested in treading the thorny road to enlightenment! In any case, it may turn out to be the sort of book which Emerson calls “empty”—the sort which when it “has gathered all its praise, and half the people say ‘what poetry! what genius!’ it still needs fuel to make fire” and, despite “all the gilt edges and vellum and morocco, all the presentation-copies to all the libraries,” soon gathers dust on the shelves desperately needed for better books. This is not to say, of course, that currently popular books are not worth reading and have no cultural significance at all; it is only to say that their popularity is no guarantee that one who reads them is thereby being enlightened.

There is, however, another sort of popularity, if one may call it so, which belongs to books and which is a fairly safe index to their cultural availability. This is the popularity which belongs to them not because they have been read by so-and-so many readers but because they have been read by so-and-so many generations of readers. These are the books, commonly called classics, which have been handed down from generation to generation and which finds readers in every generation but are not best sellers in any, sacred scriptures excepted. And they have been thus transmitted because they deserve to last, I agree with
Emerson, by virtue of the "intrinsic importance of their contents to the constant mind of man." It is for this reason also that they have special cultural significance, and one seriously concerned to cultivate his garden to its fullest capacity is well advised to search among them for tools meet for his purpose.

The search need not be limited to the so-called classics, of course. There are many promising books in the current catalogues of publishers. Particularly to be noted are those dealing with group cultures, domestic and alien, with customs and institutions and speculations at home and abroad. These are important because they promise to provide us with new and challenging perspectives which may help to arouse us from our dogmatic slumber. Especially promising for most of us are books dealing with the problems of morality and religion—fields in which our own perspectives, constantly under watch and ward, are notoriously apt to "solidify, and hem in life." If a personal reference is permissible, my own experience has been that comparative readings in the sacred books of the great religions are contributory towards loosening provincialism in both ethical judgments and religious beliefs, as are readings done in the Bible itself with due regard to the historical contexts.

The immediately preceding remarks are designed to aid in the search for books which are most culturally significant. Of course, there are lists of such books, such as the famous Five Foot Shelf and sundry listings of the so-called Great Books of the world; and these too are helpful. They contain valuable suggestions, at least as a point of departure, and it is highly probable that no one who scrutinizes them carefully will come away wholly empty-handed. But in the end, each one must make his own list, as he must do his own reading.

### IV

If what has been said in his paper is sound in principle, any book which teaches anybody anything is thereby entitled to be called cultural. But some books are much more culturally significant than others; those which instruct but do not seriously challenge are less significant than those which do both. And some of the marks of this latter group have been indicated above. Unfortunately, however, the reading of these books is to a greater or less degree a weariness to the flesh, and a final word to the point must be said.

A book which challenges may be likened to Robert Frost's wall: something there is that doesn't like it. It is both difficult and disturbing—difficult because its subject-matter is not at the beck and call of the reader, disturbing because the reading brings not peace but a sword. Resting at ease in our opinions and beliefs and loyalties, "like patience on a monument smiling at grief," is so much more comfortable than to be ill at ease about them; so much less labor is involved in carefully tending our little garden than in broadening its borders and shattering its tight and lovely symmetry. But one bent on culture in its higher reaches beyond the level of indoctrination must learn to fish in troubled waters; to be sure, he must plead the cause of his opinions and beliefs and loyalties without which he is empty of content, but he must also search diligently into their foundations should occasion demand. The most significant cultural reading is that which induces him to do the latter, hence its difficult and disturbing character-istics. Should a pessimist raise the question whether the game is worth the candle, the answer must be an appeal to the essential sanity of John Stuart Mill's famous dictum: "It is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." But this takes us beyond description into the field of appraisal.

### COLLEGE SECTION REPORT

The College Section of the South Carolina Library Association met on Friday afternoon, October 26, in the Green Room of the Clemson House. The chairman, Mr. Herbert Hucks, Jr., Librarian of Wofford College, presided, and the twenty-six librarians present identified themselves.

Mr. Alfred Rawlinson, Librarian of the University of South Carolina, gave an interesting and informative report of the advanced Seminar for Library Administrators which he attended from April 9 to May 18 at Rutgers University. Mr. Rawlinson also passed around interesting materials which he collected at the various libraries in the area which they visited while attending the Seminar.

Mrs. E. C. Thomas, Spartanburg Junior College librarian, then spoke on the problems of obtaining accreditation. She gave the highlights of the article by Manning M. Pattillo entitled, "The Appraisal of Junior College and College Libraries," which was published in the September, 1956, issue of *College and Research Libraries*.

For the coming year, Mr. J. W. Gordon Gourlay, Director of the Clemson College Library, was elected chairman of the College Section, and Miss Elizabeth C. Welborn, Librarian of Lander College, vice-chairman and secretary.

### A.E.C. PUBLICATIONS

The McKissick Memorial Library of the University of South Carolina has been designated by the Atomic Energy Commission to be a complete depository of A.E.C. publications. This is the only library in the state which will obtain copies of all the publications of the Atomic Energy Commission.

### UNIVERSITY'S LIBRARY SCIENCE PROGRAM HELPS MEET SHORTAGE OF LIBRARIANS

A full-time program of library science, meeting the certification requirements for South Carolina schools, has been in operation at the University of South Carolina for two years. Although the main purpose of this program is to provide librarians for the public schools of South Carolina, the courses are also designed to enable those interested in other types of library work to acquire the background and basic skills of librarianship. Those enrolled in the courses have included regular University students, in-service librarians, and graduate students entering the library field.

An attempt is made to schedule classes to meet as many of these diverse needs as possible. One class is held on Saturdays of each semester. During the spring semester, Cataloging and Classification will be offered from 10:00 to 12:30 on Saturday. Children's Literature will be taught on Thursday afternoons from 4:00 to 6:30. Other courses are scheduled during morning hours.
FRANCES JANE PORTER, formerly director of the Kentucky Library Division, is now librarian of the Chester County Library, Chester.

EMMA M. RITTER left her position as librarian of Reinhardt College, Waleska, Georgia, to become librarian of the Berkeley County Library, Moncks Corner.

Mrs. JANE WOODRUFF BYRD, a graduate of the University of North Carolina Library School, recently joined the staff of the McKissick Memorial Library, University of South Carolina, as Assistant Reference Librarian.


GEORGE R. LINDER, formerly librarian of the Catawba County Library, Newton, North Carolina, is now librarian of the Spartanburg Public Library.

BETTY ANN TOOLE of Aiken, a 1954 graduate of the University of South Carolina, will receive her Master's degree in Library Science from Emory University in January.

Officers of the Columbia Library Club for the coming year are FRANCES REID of the State Library Board, president, and NANCY BLAIR, Librarian of Withers and Denny Terrace Schools, program chairman.

Mrs. JOSEPHINE HUEY has joined the staff of the Rock Hill Public Library as Children's Librarian.

ELLA GAMAGE, Librarian of the Darlington Elementary School, is president of the Darlington County Unit of the South Carolina Education Association.

"Should the Doctoral Program in Library Science be Offered by a Southern Library School?" an article by J. W. GORDON GOURLAY, Director of the Clemson College Library, appeared in the July issue of The Virginia Librarian.

SUSIE MckEOWN and Mrs. SARA BIRD of the Winthrop College Library staff completed requirements for the Master's degree in Library Science this past summer at the University of Michigan. ANNETTE SHINN, also of Winthrop, is taking courses toward an advanced degree in Library Science at Emory University during the fall and winter quarters.

The Library Chairman for the South Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, MARY E. FRASER, is carrying out a program designed to get local people to look critically at their public and school library facilities. Miss Fraser believes that improvement is possible only when the public understands what good library service is and how their present service compares with accepted standards.

Attending a recent meeting of extension librarians from the southeastern states in Nashville were ESTELLENE P. WALKER and LOIS BARBARE of the State Library Board. The purpose of this meeting, which was sponsored by the U. S. Office of Education, was to discuss the provisions of the Library Services Act and the regulations governing the use of federal funds.

The Southern States Works Conference will engage in a three-year study of school libraries in the thirteen southern states affiliated with S.S.W.C. NANCY JANE DAY, School Library Supervisor, State Department of Education, has been selected to conduct this study.

Representing Clemson College at the dedication of the new library at Florida State University in Tallahassee, November 8-9, were FAYE J. MITCHELL, ELAINE SCHAAP, MARY C. STEVENSON, J. W. GORDON GOURLAY, and JOHN GOODMAN.

NANCY HARRIS, a June graduate of Furman University, has been awarded an assistantship by the Division of Library Science of Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. She began her studies there in September.

LOIS BARBARE, Catalog-Order Librarian of the State Library Board, has been elected secretary of the County and Regional Section of the Southeastern Library Association.

South Carolinians attending Southeastern Library Association in Roanoke October 11-13, included NANCY JANE DAY, Association President; ALFRED RAWLINSON and MARGARET GIVENS, McKissick Memorial Library, University of South Carolina; CAROLYNA HARPER, Mrs. BETTY FORAN, Mrs. PATSY SCOTT, Columbia City School Libraries; Mrs. VON ETTA SALLEY, Columbia College; J. W. GORDON GOURLAY, CORNELIA A. GRAHAM, JOHN GOODMAN, Mrs. MARY C. STEVENSON and J. B. HOWELL, Clemson College Library; ROBERT C. TUCKER, Furman University; MARY COX, Greenville Public Library; NELL GARRARD, Gaffney; HERBERT HUCKS, JR., Wofford College Library; Mrs. ELIZABETH G. STEVENS, Spartanburg High School; JANE WRIGHT and SUSIE MckEOWN, Winthrop; and DOROTHY SMITH, Conway.
KENT SEAGLE, formerly of the Greenville Public Library, assumed the position of librarian in the Hendersonville County Library, Hendersonville, North Carolina, in the late summer.

LOUISE BETHEA of Dillon became cataloger in the Technical Services Division of the North Carolina State Library, Raleigh, in July. She was employed formerly as director of the Baptist Collection and cataloger in the Wake Forest College Library.

Greatly missed at the SCLA Convention was CORNELIA A. GRAHAM of the Clemson Library staff. Miss Graham was called to Columbus, Ohio, to be with a sister who was seriously ill.

STATE MAGAZINE IS INDEXED

Miss Susie McKeown of the Winthrop College Library staff has just completed a five-year cumulative index to The State Magazine. It is an author and subject index of 150 pages and covers the years 1949 through 1953.

If there is sufficient interest throughout the state, Winthrop would consider publishing this index in mimeograph form. The probable cost will be five dollars per copy.

Further information may be received by writing Miss McKeown, Winthrop College Library, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

The Marion Public Library has sponsored the reprinting of Sellers' History of Marion County. Copies of this new edition may be ordered from Mrs. C. D. Joyner, Librarian, at $8.75 each.

The Darlington County Circulating Library has placed an order for a new Gerstenslager bookmobile. The new bookmobile should be available around the first of January. It will certainly improve library service in that county.

The Lancaster County Library is holding a series of adult discussion groups centered around hobby interests. Each month an expert in a particular field gives a demonstrated lecture to a group who are interested in that subject. The series will extend into the spring and will include such topics as rug making, ceramics and flower arrangement.

From: CLEMSON COLLEGE LIBRARY, Clemson, S. C.

TO

Miss Frances S. Reid
Field Service Librarian
S. C. State Library Board
Columbia, S. C.