



# LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## **Free traveling libraries in Wisconsin : the story of their growth, purposes, and development, with accounts of a few kindred movements. 1897**

Madison, Wisconsin: The Commission, 1897

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1897.

# FREE TRAVELING LIBRARIES IN WISCONSIN

IT IS AFTER ALL, NOT  
THE FEW GREAT  
LIBRARIES, BUT THE  
THOUSAND SMALL  
ONES, THAT MAY DO  
MOST FOR THE PEOPLE



FREE  
WISCONSIN LIBRARY COMMISSION

State Historical Society  
OF WISCONSIN.  
MADISON, - WIS.



A STOUT FREE TRAVELING LIBRARY STATION.

Showing a farm house in Pleasant Valley, near Downing, Dunn County, in which a library is kept. See p. 19.

# Free Traveling Libraries in Wisconsin

THE STORY OF THEIR GROWTH, PURPOSES, AND DEVELOPMENT;  
WITH ACCOUNTS OF A FEW  
KINDRED MOVEMENTS

ISSUED BY THE WISCONSIN FREE LIBRARY COMMISSION



MADISON:  
DEMOCRAT PRINTING COMPANY, STATE PRINTER  
1897



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## Foreword.

The widespread interest in the free traveling libraries of Senator Stout and Mr. Witter, brings to the Wisconsin Free Library Commission so many requests for detailed information, that this pamphlet was planned partly in self defense. These requests have come from England as well as from all parts of the United States.

When it was decided to publish the pamphlet, it was expected to include a brief article describing the recent rapid growth and development of traveling libraries in other states and countries; but certain information that was desired was not received in time. While there are many systems of such libraries, scarcely any two are exactly alike. The Wisconsin systems appear to be unique, in that, while working almost entirely for people of isolated communities, they have both local and state supervision. Their librarians are therefore in touch with their comrades in neighboring libraries, and with the great outside library world, and get inspiration from both sources. The most important of these systems have also the benefit of the experience, the counsel, and the rare business sagacity of their founders—neighbors and citizens whom the patrons of the libraries delight to honor and to please.

The Wisconsin Commission takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Melvil Dewey, of Albany, N. Y., and his co-workers, Mr. W. R. Eastman and Miss Myrtilla Avery, for constant aid in its work of helping traveling libraries. The great systems of traveling libraries which the state of New York maintains at Mr. Dewey's instance and under his guidance, show the wonderful possibilities of this new method of extending the education of the people.

The Commission is also indebted to Rev. J. W. White, of Menomonie, who spent a number of days with a camera, among the hills of Dunn county, searching for and taking a number of excellent photographs of the traveling library stations in that county—and all as "a labor of love."

NOVEMBER, 1897.

## Wisconsin Free Library Commission.

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# FREE TRAVELING LIBRARIES IN WISCONSIN.

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FRANK A. HUTCHINS

*Secretary Wisconsin Free Library Commission.*

No recent movement for the public weal in Wisconsin has won such quick and ready sympathy as the effort to put the best of books and current literature where country people may read them freely. The cities and larger villages have been rapidly establishing free public libraries, but most former efforts to supply farmers and people of small hamlets with free reading have failed. Public libraries must have fresh books occasionally to hold their clientage and these books must be wisely selected. Small country libraries usually get fresh books rarely and generally get uninteresting volumes. Less than five per cent. of the public libraries started in small communities have proved permanently successful. A few years ago Captain Andrew Tainter and wife, of Menomonie, Wisconsin, made an effort to provide books for the farmers of Dunn county. They founded a beautiful library in Menomonie in memory of a deceased daughter and made it free to all the residents of the county. Their library was well managed, but Hon. J. H. Stout, who was one of the trustees, found that a country population of 16,000 people drew less than 3,000 volumes a year. After an investigation he concluded that the failure to get books in larger numbers was due to the difficulty of getting and returning them and not to a lack of appreciation of their value. In casting about for a remedy, he finally decided to adapt the system of traveling libraries to suit the needs of Dunn county. He first secured the co-operation of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission in perfecting his plans, selecting and buying the books and interesting the people.

The writer, as the representative of the commission, had the pleasure of being closely identified with the new movement during its early history and has studied it carefully on the field. Mr. Stout's first move was to purchase a library which included 500 of the most wholesome popular books,—the good books which the experience of all public libraries prove are the most enjoyed by the masses of the people. There were the great standard and contemporary novels, the most entertaining books of travel and biography, of history and science. There were books for children, for

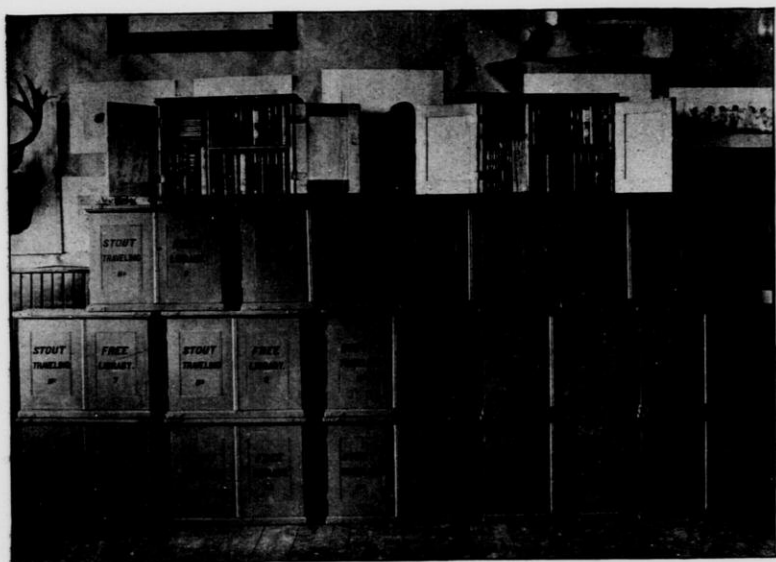
the busy housewife, for the farmer and mechanic, and for the studious men and women. There were the leading books of the day and the books of all time. The "Farm Ballads" jostled "The Merchant of Venice" and Mrs. Lincoln's "Boston Cook Book" stood side by side with "The Birds' Christmas Carol" and "Helen's Babies." It was a great array of popular books and the effort to give each person in Dunn county an opportunity to read any and every one of them was worthy of all the admiration and sympathy it excited. This excellent library of 500 volumes was divided into sixteen small libraries, each containing thirty volumes. Each library was put up in a strong book case which had a shelf, double doors with a lock and key, a record book for loans, printed copies of the few simple rules, borrowers' blanks, and so complete a line of equipments that it could be set up anywhere on a table, a box or a counter and managed as an independent library.

While the machinery was complete enough for its purpose, it was so simple that any intelligent person could operate it after five minutes of explanation.

When he had arranged to purchase these libraries, Mr. Stout had said to the people of the small hamlets and to the farmers of the county, "You may have the use of these libraries under certain conditions. You must form local library associations of responsible people and elect a secretary to represent you in dealing with me, and a librarian to deal with you. You must agree to have the books well cared for and to keep them in a convenient place where every resident of the neighborhood who uses the books carefully can get them without cost. Persons who misuse the books or destroy them must pay proper penalties. When the most of the readers have read as many of the books as they wish, the library may be exchanged for another. For each library sent you will pay a fee of one dollar. In consideration of this fee I will pay all transportation expenses for the first library and all the expenses of furnishing the libraries, repairing the books and keeping up the supply of blanks."

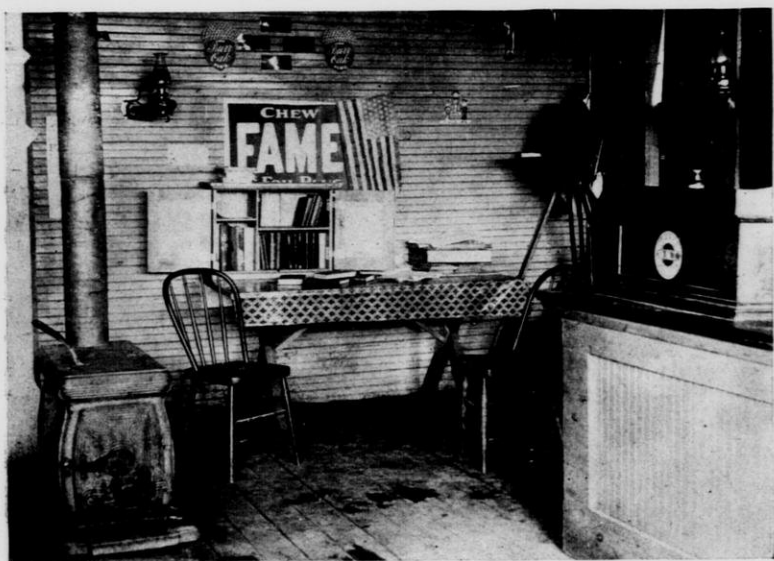
Mr. Stout made his plans in January, 1896, but the libraries did not go out till May of the same year. At that time sixteen local associations had complied with the requirements and their members were anxiously awaiting the books. The delivery of the first libraries and the pleasure derived from the books kindled desires in other communities and applications for other libraries were hurried in. To meet the growing demand Mr. Stout first bought ten more libraries and then another nine, and within a year he had thirty-seven libraries with thirty-four constantly in the field. Two of the libraries were reserved for convenience in exchanging, and one has been in frequent demand as a sample and has been exhibited in many parts of the state.

Each of the first libraries sent out contained only ten books for children. As the Wisconsin law provides for a school library in every district, it was



GROUP OF STOUT FREE TRAVELING LIBRARIES.

A view of the first sixteen libraries in their cases before they went out from Menomonie on their first trip.



STOUT LIBRARY STATION IN DOWNING, DUNN COUNTY.

The library case is on a table in the rear of a country store. Borrowers are at liberty to sit by the table and read the books and periodicals.





thought that this was a sufficiently large proportion. Reports from the libraries soon showed that more books for children were needed. The school libraries were small, often inaccessible, sometimes ill-selected and the few new books came only once a year. The neighborhoods with the best school libraries were found to have the most eager readers. The libraries were therefore increased by adding a few volumes of children's books to each, and they now contain from thirty-two to forty volumes each. Of these volumes about one-half are children's books.

Before the libraries went out Mr. Stout's neighbors in Menomonie had contributed hundreds of copies of the popular magazines, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *McClure's*, and others, and other hundreds of copies of the leading children's periodicals and illustrated papers. Good supplies of these are sent with each library and are freely circulated but are not returned with the libraries as people enjoy giving enough copies to keep up a constant supply. Cloth bound copies of the "Wisconsin Farm Institute Bulletins" and of the reports of the various state and agricultural societies, and many of the more popular volumes and pamphlets published by the agricultural department at Washington are sent directly to the local library associations and are owned by them. It is hoped that these will serve as the nuclei of small permanent libraries.

A trip through Dunn county to organize local library associations showed the need for the libraries. This county has a population of less than 25,000 people and covers an area two-thirds of that of Rhode Island. About 8,000 people live in and near Menomonie and get their books from its library. Of the 16,000 people living outside of the city, the great proportion are farmers and none of the scattered hamlets have more than 300 or 400 inhabitants. A part of the county has a sandy soil, and some of the people are quite poor. Two or three townships are largely prairie land with good soil and the people are generally thrifty farmers. A large section of the county was formerly a dense hard-wood forest with an excellent soil and here the work of clearing the land is still in progress and there are many log cabins. Thirty years ago the lumbermen were cutting the white pine along the banks of the streams and they built small hamlets. The houses which they built still stand but the saw mills have moved away. The business is gone and the dwellings are falling into decay. Many of them, however, are occupied by widows with families of children and by people who are poor from various causes. A widow with small children can rent one of these houses for twenty-five or fifty cents a month and manage with a garden and poultry to keep her family together and out of the dreaded poor house. She cannot, however, give them good reading. One little hamlet furnished an example that is unfortunately not unique. I visited the school house one morning and found some children who were most plainly clad but were clean and wholesome appearing. In looking over

the school library I found about a dozen books, most of them beyond the comprehension of the children, and a worn copy of the World's Fair number of the *Youth's Companion*. No copy of a children's periodical was taken in the neighborhood and this "sample copy" had gone again and again to every home and been pondered and loved and thumbed until the stained edges of its leaves were thin and crackled with the wearing of little hands. The pictures were still intact and eloquent of a new world of beauty and art, of unknown triumphs of human industry and intelligence, to these boys and girls hungering for marvels of the great, wonderful outside world.

The eagerness of the people for the libraries was often touching and was as evident among people who read little as among the more intelligent. Illiterate parents seemed to know, almost by instinct, that if their children could read good books freely they would be likely to be better men and women and to hold better stations in life. Even rough men acknowledged the value of good literature. At one hamlet where I inquired about a neighboring four corners, I was told, "It is useless to go there for it's a regular hell-hole." I visited it, however, and found it included a store, saloon, railway station, blacksmith shop and a dozen houses. The farmers about were poor and some of them coarse and rough. The storekeeper had received a scant education but he was a prompt, reliable business man and after a time talked quite freely. He said "My mother died when I was quite young, my father was a drunkard and I had a hard time when I was a boy. I had a chance for a few years to get books from a public library and they furnished me the pleasantest hours I had. I have been pretty rough and our place here is tough. Last Saturday night there was a dance and the boys filled up with whiskey and the girls stood around and made fun of them. I believe that if they would read good books it would put a stop to that kind of thing, and I will take the library and make the boys and girls read the books." He was as good as his word and the circulation of his library was double that of the one left in his scoffing neighbor's community. Within a few months a good woman, who had been the main and almost the only worker for the best things in the neighborhood, took the library under her charge and has made it a constant power for good among the young people.

In another hamlet I visited the village store in the evening and found a dozen young men and boys loafing and smoking. After explaining my mission to the storekeeper he said, "I will make the arrangements for the library and take charge of it to help get these loafers out of my store. They are good boys except for their habit of loafing, but they haven't anything to do and I can't turn them out." This hamlet had maintained an excellent school library for a number of years and the traveling library had a good circulation from the start. The great majority of those who read

its volumes were young people from sixteen to twenty-five years of age who had learned to read through the school library but were left without books when their school days closed. They were loafers from compulsion until the traveling library opened the door of escape to the broad fields of literature.

The success of the libraries in all parts of the county was immediate and the interest in them has continued to grow.

#### THE LIBRARIANS.

A large share of this success has been due to the local librarians. Almost without exception they have been earnest and active in their work and many of them have grown to have an absorbing interest in it. Miss Stella Lucas, the librarian of the Memorial Library in Menomonie, has recently had charge of all the details of the work. She visits the stations frequently and the librarians often meet her at the central library. They have caught enthusiasm and inspiration from her wider intelligence. Three times a number of these librarians have met in "librarians institutes" in Menomonie and in their conferences the real library missionary spirit has been as evident and warm as in the meetings of their salaried comrades. These institutes have been attended by librarians from other parts of the state who wish to show their appreciation of the devotion of these pickets of the library army. And it is this devotion of these unpaid workers which is the most inspiring feature of this movement. In every community we have found some earnest man or woman anxious to help their fellows and waiting the word of encouragement and the opportunity. To them even more than to their neighbors the library is a pleasure, the burden of its care a blessing and a proof of the wisdom of the Spanish proverb, "He who sells oil anoints his own hands."

Every document issued by the Wisconsin Free Library Commission and the Wisconsin Library Association goes to all these isolated workers, and they are feeling and appreciating the feeling of comradeship with their brother and sisters at the larger centers.

#### LOCATION OF STATIONS.

Of the thirty-four stations twenty-two are in farm houses, nine in post offices, two in country stores and one in a railway station. Two of the post offices are in small stores and the others are in farm houses. Twenty-six, then, or about two-thirds are in farm houses, but nearly all are in or near post offices and therefore convenient for the people of their neighborhoods.

#### CIRCULATION OF BOOKS.

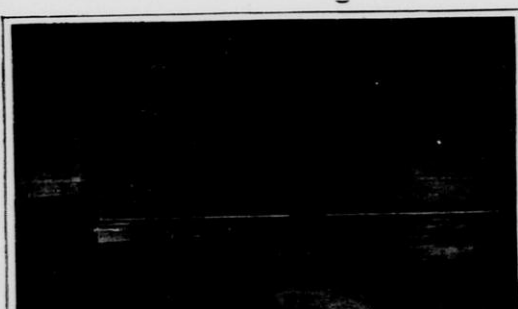
No complete record of the circulation of books from these libraries has been compiled, but some interesting facts may be gathered from the fol-

lowing table which gives the statistics of the first ten libraries which were returned to the central library after two trips. The table gives the name of the local library association, the length of time it retained each library, the number of borrowers and the circulation of books from each library. It is as follows:

Library Associations.	No. of months.	Borrowers.	Circulation.
Beaver Creek.....	1	6	34
	2	5	30
Cedar Falls.....	1	6	53
	2	7	87
Downing.....	1	6	35
	2	5	34
Dunnville.....	1	6	39
	2	6	63
Elk Mound.....	1	6	27
	2	5½	33
Louisville.....	1	6	47
	2	6	46
Red Cedar.....	1	6	30
	2	4½	42
Waubek.....	1	5	39
	2	6	45
Eau Galle.....	1	7	30
	2	8½	28
Knapp.....	1	6	34
	2	10	47
		813	3,829

These figures show an average of 40 borrowers at a station, but it includes a large proportion of the more populous stations so that the averages are slightly larger than will be given when all the returns are in.\* The average time of a trip for each library is between six and seven months, and the average circulation 192. At the first visit of a library to a station its books were taken out 172 times, but on its second trip the number was increased to 210. The average number of borrowers to a library on the first trip was 36 and on the second trip 45. This increase is a very gratifying proof that the libraries are growing in popularity. The figures seem to foretell a circulation of between 10,000 and 12,000 volumes annually from the 34 libraries which are constantly in the field. But this by no means

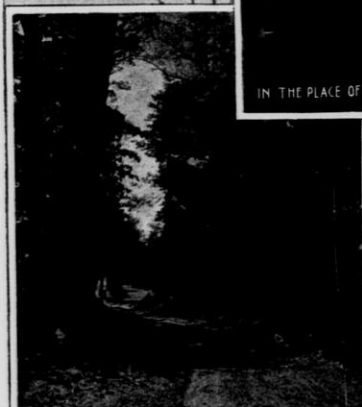
\* Since the above table was put in type returns have been received from five more stations. The fifteen stations report a circulation of 5,588 books in a little less than thirteen months. The average circulation of a library on the first trip was 160 and on the second 212. A few libraries are returning from their third trips and these show another gain in circulation.



INTERIOR OF LOG SCHOOL HOUSE



IN THE PLACE OF HONOR



A WESTON ROAD



PIONEER BUILDINGS



A USEFUL RELIC



# VIEWS IN WESTON, DUNN COUNTY,

In and near a Stout Traveling Library Station. The library is kept in a parlor by a thrifty German farmer.





represents the entire usefulness of the libraries as the librarians say that a book loaned is often read by from two to five persons before it is returned, so that the total recorded circulation must be at least doubled to get the full results. The first ten libraries sent out contained only 30 volumes each during the first year and each volume was drawn on an average twelve times. Since more simple books for children have been added, the circulation is increasing.

## COMPARATIVE POPULARITY OF BOOKS.

The works of fiction and especially the fiction for young people were the most read and the record showed that the tastes of the country people were very like those of their city cousins. The list of the leaders in the several libraries is as follows: Miss Alcott's "Old Fashioned Girl;" Mrs. Lillie's "Household of Glen Holly;" Aldrich's "Story of a Bad Boy;" W. O. Stoddard's "Dab Kinzer" and "Little Smoke;" Mrs. Barr's "Bow of Orange Ribbon;" Habberton's "Helen's Babies;" Col. King's "Colonel's Daughter;" Mrs. Catherwood's "Story of Tonty;" Eggleston's "Hoosier School Master," and Mrs. Burnham's "Next Door." Other books that crowded the leaders were "Rudder Grange," "A Singular Life," "Hero Tales of American History," "Prisoner of Zenda," "Old Curiosity Shop," "Oliver Twist," and "Oakleigh." While some of Dickens's works were quite popular, a two-volume edition of "David Copperfield" was drawn but twice, but it only shared the fate of nearly all other works in two volumes. It seemed worthy of note that Riis's graphic descriptions of tenement house life in New York, "Children of the Poor," and "How the Other Half Live," were very popular in the farmers' families. Each library contained a volume, twelve numbers, of the St. Nicholas Magazine, bound in two parts, and each part was taken twelve times in the year. When one of these parts was taken out it was generally kept two weeks and read more or less by each member of the family which it visited. When the libraries first went out the children were awed by these big quartos, but after they had learned about their short stories and pictures, the "St. Nicholas books" became very popular and the second year of Mr. Stout's experiment will show a much larger circulation for them. Among the books for young people those of Miss Alcott were the most popular, with those of W. O. Stoddard a close second. Only the earlier novels of Col. King were bought, but his novels and those of Mrs. Clara Louise Burnham were among the most popular. A few good books on agriculture were scarcely read at all, though copies of the "Wisconsin Farm Institute Bulletin" were popular. Only a few duplicates were purchased and among these were five copies of Mrs. Lincoln's "Boston Cook Book." These were drawn ten or twelve times each, annually, while some other books on household economy were



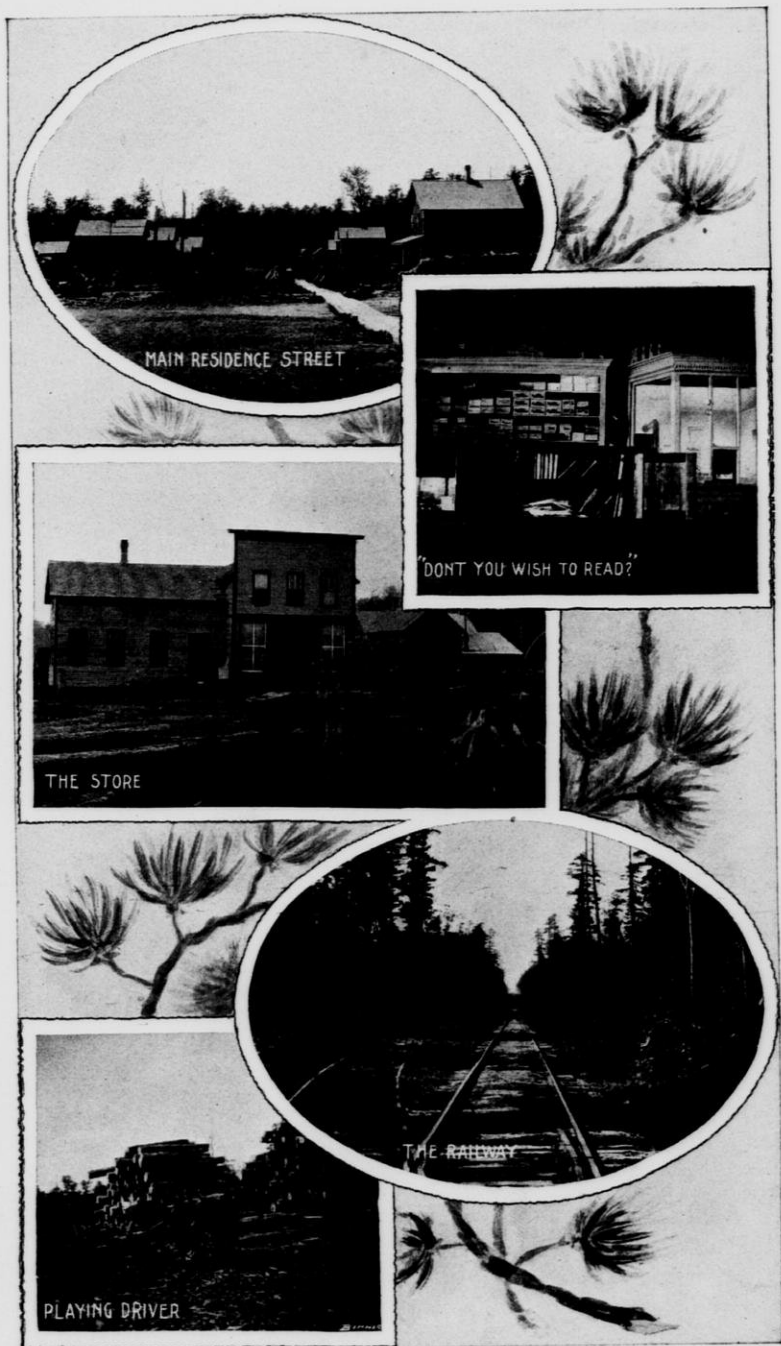
drawn but once or twice. The simpler volumes upon American history and biography have been in constant demand, and the proportion of these has been increased.

THE J. D. WITTER FREE TRAVELING LIBRARIES.

In May, 1896, Mr. J. D. Witter of Grand Rapids, who has been for some years an active and liberal supporter of the free library at his home, heard of the new plan and immediately determined to employ it to help his fellow citizens of Wood county. He followed Mr. Stout's plan in the main but instead of sending the libraries in book cases he sent them in chests and made each local library association buy a book case large enough to accommodate about seventy-five volumes, hoping that the property interest in the book case and in the volumes that might come to the association by gift and purchase might stimulate the growth of permanent libraries.

The story of Mr. Witter's experiment and success is very like that of Mr. Stout's. Everywhere there was the same eagerness for the books and everywhere the same welcome for them by the thoughtful people who had been working for the cause of education with little outside help. The country schools and the school libraries of Wood county are not as good as those of Dunn county. As a result, the books of Mr. Witter's libraries do not circulate quite as freely as those of Mr. Stout's but they are more needed and are doing at least as much good. Mr. Witter started with fifteen libraries of thirty volumes each but soon added ten more volumes of children's books to each library and then added twelve more libraries. He has recently purchased 300 more volumes to be added to the older libraries and to form new libraries. He has also bought a number of German books to go to communities where the older people cannot read English. To Nekoosa, a small village of about 600 people which has grown up about a large paper mill within the past four years, he sent one library and then added a second and a third, as even two could not supply the demand. At Pittsville the library is in the shop of a barber who is intelligent and friendly with the boys and girls. He had two libraries which he kept nearly a year without exchange because the most of the books were out all of the time. At Biron, where a hamlet has grown up about a paper mill, a reading room has been started to co-operate with the library. Mr. Witter furnishes the magazines and newspapers and the people heat and light and care for it. It is hoped that Mr. Witter's experiment in this line will lead to similar experiments in other mill towns.

Of the hundred traveling libraries now at work in Wisconsin no other seems to be doing as much good as the one in a little hamlet in Wood county, where the librarian is "section boss" on the railroad, post master, clerk of the school district, and an officer of the town. The people are



# VIEWS IN ARPIN,

A "mill town" in Wood county, where a J. D. Witter Traveling Library is kept on the counter of the "company store," which contains also the post-office.



German and Bohemian farmers and little given to books, but the librarian and his wife have looked after all the little boys and girls and manage to get them to read the books, the papers, or at least the pictures, and through the children they are reaching the homes and the older people.

Mr. Witter has placed the control of his libraries in the hands of the board of trustees of the Grand Rapids public library, of which he is a member. The librarian of this library, Mrs. W. B. Raymond, has charge of the field work in connection with the secretary and librarian of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission. The possibilities of Mr. Witter's work have appealed most strongly to many of his neighbors, and his fellow trustees have been as enthusiastic as himself. On account of their interest and efforts, the work of the public library in Grand Rapids has been greatly stimulated; its circulation has greatly increased, and the character of the reading has improved. The work for others has borne fruit at home.

#### A LIBRARY MEETING.

In October, 1897, a library meeting was held in Grand Rapids under the management of the local library board and of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission. One session was devoted exclusively to traveling libraries, and librarians read papers upon the following practical topics: "The Relation of the School to the Traveling Library;" "How may the Librarian get the Boys to Read?" "How may the Librarian get the Girls to Read?" Mr. J. D. Witter and Mr. J. H. Stout led in a discussion of the question "May Traveling Library Stations become Centers for Literary and Farmers' Clubs?" Miss Mary E. Tanner of Stevens Point spoke upon "Traveling Pictures." At other sessions Mrs. C. S. Morris, of Berlin, spoke on the "Relation of the Public Library to the Women's Clubs," Miss L. E. Stearns, of Milwaukee, on "Children's Reading," Prof. Guy S. Ford, City Superintendent G. L. Williams and County Superintendent R. A. Havenor, all of Wood county, upon school and public libraries.

Before the meeting every traveling library station was visited by one or two of the officers of the Commission and public meetings were held in a number of places.

#### NORTHERN WISCONSIN TRAVELING LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

In November, 1896, the Commission held a "library meeting" in Ashland. One morning session was devoted to traveling libraries and the interest in the subject was so great that a mass meeting of citizens was called late in the afternoon and an organization effected to furnish such libraries to the people in a number of counties on the borders of Lake Superior. The meeting was very enthusiastic and the work begun at that time has

been persistently followed. Those who have done the most work are: the president, Mrs. E. E. Vaughn, the founder of the excellent Vaughn Library at Ashland; the secretary, Miss Janet M. Green, who is the librarian of the Vaughn Library, and Rev. S. E. Lathrop. Mr. Lathrop is a veteran worker for the library cause and has founded a number of free libraries in a number of states. He visits the people of the destitute communities and finds good places for the libraries. These energetic workers have been well supported by the ladies of the Monday Club in Ashland and their enterprise has been very successful. They have thirteen libraries in the field and are now forming twelve more. They write that they need more contributions of juvenile books.

In no other part of the state is the need of this work so great as in the territory covered by this association. In its field are scores of hamlets where the residents are mainly young men who work in the mills in summer and in the woods in the winter. In the spring and fall many of them are idle for lack of work and spend their time loafing about saloons, many of them of the lowest character. In almost any of these places, however, is a family of persons who will do missionary work if helped. Settlers are sparsely located, and they generally are poor and in debt for their land.

Last year a young woman who was teaching in Price county told an officer of the commission her story, which ran as follows: "Last September I went to my school which was twelve miles from Ogema. We drove over corduroy roads so rough that I did not wish to go out of my district until I came home for a vacation four months afterward. We have only a few families. The pupils are all small, there are no neighbors within a few miles of us, no one takes a newspaper and it is very dull. We have a dozen books in the school library but only three or four are simple enough for the children. One of the latter is 'Black Beauty' and, at the request of the scholars I have read it through to them three times." After her return to her school the Commission sent her a bundle of popular magazines and children's periodicals. There was also a paper covered copy of the "Nürnberg Stove." After some weeks the teacher wrote: "I can not tell you how much pleasure your package has given. Every family is constantly reading in the long evenings. The children did not know that such nice papers were printed as the *Harper's Young People* and the *Youth's Companion*. They hurry their lessons that I may read to them. I have read the 'Nürnberg Stove' to them three times and they think it is a wonderful story. All of them have written sketches of this story for me."

In some localities the Poles, Bohemians and other recent arrivals from Europe are massed in solid settlements and it is difficult to find any except the children who can read English, and the children can only read the simplest books. It is a noteworthy fact that the books first demanded in

such communities are those on American history and the old world fairy stories. The Poles especially want to know of the battles for American liberty and the children read to rapt family circles the story of the Boston Tea Party and of Bunker Hill. It is in their very blood to fight for liberty and the great traditions of our history kindle their imaginations and their pride in their new country. It was a boy from such a family who was given an illustrated book on Poland in a public library because it was thought it would interest him and his parents to see the pictures of the old home. He returned it the next day and dropped it on the counter saying, "I want a book about *our* country."

Now is the formative time with these children. A week's work for them now is worth a month's work ten years from now. They will be ruled in their conduct upon governmental and public affairs by the ideals gained from the study of the lives of Washington, Franklin and Lincoln, and from the perusal of the best traditions of American history as found in the books of Eggleston, Coffin, Scudder and Parkman, or they will be led by the appeals of future demagogues to their passions and prejudices.

In selecting for the libraries all partisan and sectarian books are carefully avoided and an effort is made to secure and retain the confidence of people of all shades of opinion.

#### CHIPPEWA COUNTY TRAVELING LIBRARIES.

In the summer of 1896, Miss Maud A. Earley, librarian of the public library at Chippewa Falls, determined to make an effort to establish some traveling libraries even if she could not get a large fund. With the help of a few friends at her home and of the Wisconsin Commission she secured about 150 interesting volumes, though all were more or less worn. These she divided into four smaller libraries and said to the leaders in several neighborhoods in the county: "I will send these libraries to the communities that will make the strongest efforts to deserve them." One result of this offer is noteworthy. At Eagleton there is a store which has the post office, a shop and a school house in the center of a community of farmers. Two or three local leaders went at work in earnest, and with the assistance of their friends gave an entertainment and supper and to everybody's surprise and encouragement raised more than \$30 to purchase a library. They enjoyed this so much that they have had two or three entertainments since and raised good sums of money, besides making unwonted social successes and stimulating a good public spirit. The first money raised was expended under the direction of the State Commission and an admirable list of popular books was chosen. After a time a small, unoccupied building was secured, its interior papered and painted, shelves were put up and rugs, a table, chairs and curtains given or purchased. The build-

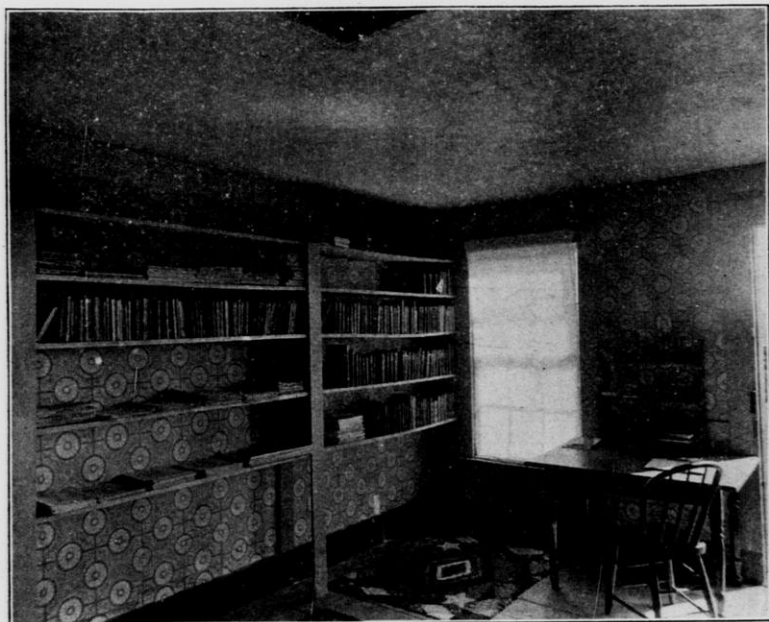
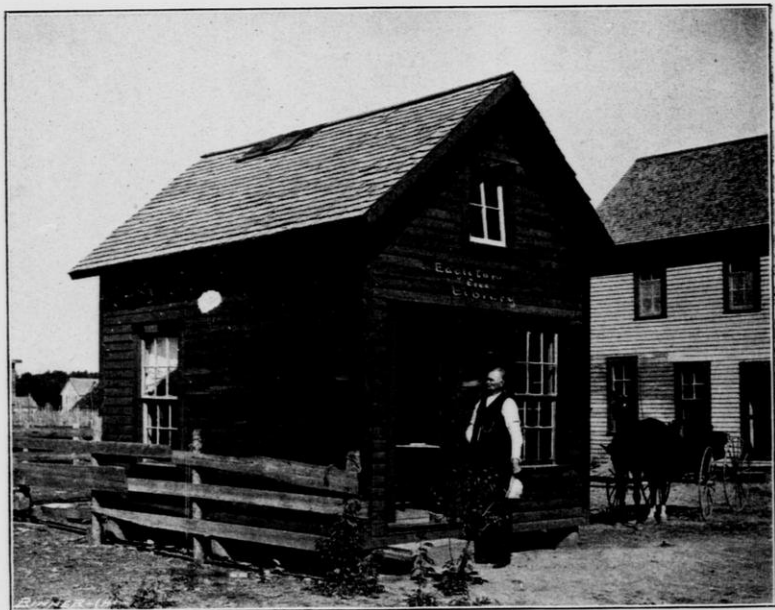


ing now rests near the home of the librarian, Mr. Geo. W. Budge. Pictures of the interior and exterior of this building are given in this pamphlet. In the first of these pictures the books of the traveling library that were not loaned at the time are shown on the lower shelf. All the other volumes shown were given to or bought by this plucky little library association. The magazines were sent by Miss Earley and the Commission. The library is used as a reading room Saturday afternoons but it is open in one sense all the time because the librarian tells the people "whenever you want a book come right along and you shall have it." Mr. Budge receives a compensation which is almost ridiculously small in money but inestimably large if the gratitude of one's neighbors and the consciousness of benefits conferred are reckoned at their real value. There are many German farmers in this neighborhood. The Commission has recently sent to this library a lot of German magazines and illustrated weeklies which are read with great delight, but the people ought to have some good, popular German books. In the case of this little library at Eagleton it is difficult to say whether the richest of the blessings it has conferred has been the information and the happiness carried by the books and periodicals or the inspiration arising from the successful social enterprises and the welding of the community in its struggle for a high purpose. A thousand isolated farming communities in Wisconsin need just such incentives to a better social and intellectual life more than they need money. Here's success to Mr. Budge and his friends! May their history inspire the emulation of hundreds of similar communities in our good commonwealth!

#### TOMAHAWK FREE TRAVELING LIBRARIES.

W. H. Bradley, of Tomahawk, is trying an experiment in traveling libraries which are conducted somewhat differently from others in the state. He is president of the Tomahawk Lumber Co., which conducts great enterprises in the northern part of Lincoln county. He manages not only mills and lumber camps but a number of stores in and near Tomahawk. He has bought a few hundred books with which he has started a free library at Tomahawk. From this central library he will make up smaller libraries and send them to his store-keepers in outlying hamlets for the use of the mill men and farmers. These smaller libraries will not be permanent collections of books, but in number and quality they will be selected to meet the needs of the settlement to which they go. Mr. Bradley has also started a free reading room in Tomahawk and will send the magazines and papers which have been read there out with his small libraries. The stranger who looks out upon the horizon at Tomahawk seems to see an unbroken forest but all through a large number of townships are scattered settlers who will gladly travel many miles to get good simple books and





THE EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR OF THE EAGLETON FREE LIBRARY.

A traveling library station in Chippewa county. See p. 15.



illustrated magazines for their children. The monotony of the winter's evenings where one or two or three families live a mile or a few miles from any neighbors gives abundant time for thoughtful reading and such people talk over their reading with a zest unknown in most city families. 'Mr. Bradley counts much upon the pleasure his books and papers will give to his mill hands and the men in his lumber camps.

#### STEVENS POINT NORMAL SCHOOL.

Miss Irene Warren, the librarian at the Stevens Point Normal School last year, secured enough good and readable books from her friends and the Commission to furnish three or four traveling libraries. Miss Mary E. Tanner, of the same school, prepared a number of traveling pictures to accompany these libraries, and they carried them out to country school houses in Portage county and started them on their missions by gathering the people and talking to them of books and pictures. Students of the normal school went with the leaders and added to the pleasure of the evenings with musical exercises. These meetings and the books and pictures seem to have been greatly enjoyed by the country people. The work of the traveling pictures is described by Miss Tanner in another part of this pamphlet.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The students of Milwaukee-Downer College have contributed to the Commission about forty-five volumes which have been used to form a traveling library. There are many hamlets where a public library has been struggling for years with its usefulness greatly hindered because it can not get fresh books. The Milwaukee-Downer College traveling library has gone for its first trip to a little community in Fond du Lac county, where three women have managed under great difficulties to maintain a small free library for some years.

Hon. E. D. Smith, of Menasha, who is just erecting a beautiful building for the free library at Menasha, proposes to use that library as a center for a traveling library system when the work of erecting the new building is under way. Other citizens are contemplating similar projects. The Woman's Club, of Madison, has given to the Commission ten dollars in money, a number of books and pictures and large bundles of periodicals which have been used by the northern Wisconsin libraries. Citizens of Milwaukee, Whitewater and Oconomowoc have made like gifts. Miss Stearns recently made a call in the German newspapers of Milwaukee for German periodicals and received immediate responses from a score of families. One family asked for the address of a German family to whom they could send an illustrated periodical regularly. The American Hu-

mane Society, of Boston, has sent the Commission 2,500 copies of "*Our Dumb Animals*," which have been distributed to the children through the kindness of the librarians at the small stations.

The State Historical Society, at Madison, has freely sent out its publications to the travelling libraries, and has collected for them books and magazines, which it has placed at the service of the Commission. The Society proposes to continue this service for the smaller libraries of the state, and is actively co-operating with the Commission.

#### USEFULNESS OF PERIODICALS.

Through the kindness of friends in all parts of the state, the Commission has been able to send to the traveling library stations many thousands of copies of excellent periodicals. Boys and girls in southern Wisconsin have sent their cherished files of the *Youth's Companion* to their brothers and sisters in the forests of northern Wisconsin — a kindness "that blesseth him that gives and him that takes." Families have sent the *Harper's*, *Century*, *Scribner's*, *McClure's* and other magazines, the *Harper's Weekly*, *Ladies' Home Journal* and other illustrated weeklies, the *Harper's Round Table*, the *St. Nicholas Magazine*, and many others nearly as popular.

In many places the periodicals seem to have done as much good as the books. Some boys and girls have sent us files of the *Youth's Companion* containing complete long stories, bound in strong manilla paper. Such a file will go first to a school house, and many of its brighter articles will be read to the school by the teacher. It will then go from family to family and be read more or less by all the members of each, and then it may go to another district. In many cases the short stories of the children's papers make the bridge from the meager readers of the school to the books of the libraries. Many children from homes where there is nothing to read save the most elementary school books do not get practice enough in reading to read easily, and spelling out the words of a small book seems a formidable undertaking. In some communities where people speaking a foreign language are massed, Germans, Norwegians, Poles or Bohemians, the children's periodicals attract the older people by their pictures and the whole family spell out a story to learn about a picture.

In one home where I found a library case on the floor of the family living room, the house mother told me with a touch of emotion how great the good the books were doing; how her children and their comrades gathered about the library after school until she had to drive them out to "do the chores." The most popular book in the library she said was "*Helen's Babies*," "and that," she added, "is the only book I have read. I don't get time to read through the day and only when the children are in bed

can I take up a book, and then I am too tired, but I can read a short story or about somebody's travels and I can look over the pictures and the reading rests me. We used to have such papers and magazines before we moved out here from the east and it seems good to have them again."

In a hamlet in the hills of Dunn county the neighbors have been reading the brief articles and stories of the periodicals to a woman who has been confined to her room for years on account of a physical disability. This woman and a sister lived in a small house without other household companions and they and their neighbors had been unable to afford such luxuries as copies of last year's magazines, which some families burn to be rid of.

The following letters give views of these libraries by observers on the field:

[The frontispiece gives a view of the house in Pleasant Valley where a library is kept and of the school house mentioned in the following letter, which was written by the teacher.]

Pleasant Valley is the name applied, and justly too, to a farming district in the western part of Dunn county, just south of Downing.

The people are industrious and intelligent and are always glad to welcome any move for the advancement of their community.

Knowing this you will not be surprised to learn that when they heard of Mr. Stout's generosity and the travelling libraries sent out by him, they were only too glad to apply for one and to comply with the simple and easy requirements necessary to form an association.

In the course of time the library came, and has since made many acquaintances and friends.

It was placed in a cheerful home just across the road from the school house. Besides the thirty books contained in the library, we received many papers and magazines, rich in entertainment and useful information. A few of these were *The Forum*, *The Cosmopolitan*, *The Ladies' Home Journal* and *The Youth's Companion*.

Among the best known authors whose works we have had are Louisa M. Alcott, A. Conan Doyle, James Otis, John Fiske, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Kingsley and Thomas Knox. On the record sheet kept by the librarian, the space is sufficient for each book to be taken out fourteen times; but one book went beyond that limit. On an average each book was taken out six times. We had a good variety of books, especially in history and travels; the former were so well suited to our needs at school that we kept one or more in the school for references.

I believe the best book in our library was "Masterpieces of British Literature." \* Who does not feel richer after having spent a long quiet even-

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\*The "Masterpieces of British Literature" contains the portraits, biographical sketches and complete representative masterpieces of sixteen great writers. Tennyson is represented by "Enoch Arden," "Crossing the Bar" and other short poems, Milton by "Lycidas," "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," Lamb by "A Dissertation on Roast Pig," "Dream Children," "Barbara S —," and "Old China," and Macaulay by "Horatius." Gray, Byron, Cowper, Ruskin, Dickens, Burns, Bacon, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Cowper and Addison are also represented. Of their own accord the older pupils brought this book to Miss Waterston and asked to have it used as a substitute for their well worn "Fifth Reader." It is an interesting fact that the favorite selections were "Enoch Arden" and "Rab and his Friends."

ing with such men as Dr. John Brown, Alfred Tennyson, Charles Lamb, Thomas Gray or John Milton?

Who can read "Enoch Arden" without having all his sympathies aroused? or who "Horatius" without feeling his heart swell with true patriotism and a sense of justice?

But you are anxious to know what the library *has done*—that I can tell you only in part—for it seems to me that in this short time, the seed has merely been sown. Those who read the books are compelled to have the same thoughts, hopes and interests as the great men who write them, and thus their thoughts begin to dwell on better things. But don't think that all of the benefits are of the future for we are enjoying many of them to-day.

I will enumerate a few of them for you. I noticed while visiting at the different homes, that the family (children were as zealous as parents) talked about the library and the books in it. Then at school the older girls had been accustomed to play ball or other games, at every possible opportunity. At first I noticed that one or two would read a little at recess or noon. Finally I observed that they would take a good book and go out under the trees at the side of the school ground, and while one would read aloud, a few would sew or knit, for they now began to bring some little work with them.

I have also read a number of books to the school, reading a chapter or so each morning for the opening exercise. I found that there was less tardiness while so doing than at other times. The younger pupils were fully as eager as the older ones; when their interest became absorbed in a particular book, such as "Helen's Babies" by John Habberton, they would spend a recess or noon with the people of the story rather than accept the urgent requests of a dozen pupils to join in their play.

We feel that we have derived a world of good from the books and our hearts are full of gratitude to the generous giver.

Always after reading a thoroughly good book I feel like saying "thank you" to Mr. Stout—and, indeed, he would be kept busy if all the "thank you's" that are felt could be expressed to him in words.

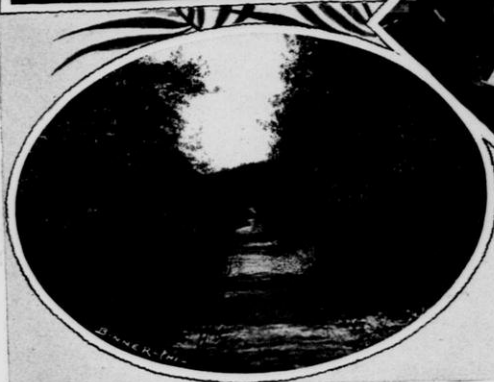
DELLA WATERSTON.

#### THE WITTER TRAVELING LIBRARIES IN NEKOOSA.

Nekoosa is a town of six hundred inhabitants which has grown up within four years on a pine barren about a paper mill eight miles below Grand Rapids on the Wisconsin river. Three traveling libraries of forty volumes each are now kept constantly in use in Nekoosa and an effort is now making to supplement their work with a reading room. The following letter was written to the editor of this pamphlet some months ago by the secretary of the Nekoosa traveling library association whose zeal has been one cause of the great success which he describes.

Your request for a letter in regard to the good which the library has done at Nekoosa is gladly complied with. Of course the good which the library has done cannot be fully known, because we cannot see into the hearts and minds of the readers to find the new aspirations, new purposes and new motives of their lives. But that the winter's reading has helped many an one I do not doubt. I can give a few of the conditions which the library met here, and tell something of the use which has been made of it, and of a beginning of a taste for reading among the boys and girls, and a few of the young people.





Station in Davis, Dunn county.

Dunnville, Dunn county.

Corduroy road between two Dunn Co. stations.

Station in Little Elk Creek, Dunn county.

Boys selecting books from library in Ne-koosa, Wood county. See p. 20.





The conditions which the library met here were perhaps peculiar for a town of this size, but perhaps not so peculiar when we remember that the town has a growth of only a few years, and this mostly from a class which has had few opportunities for reading or for gaining even a fair common school education. It is surprising to think that not a few of our business men, and a still greater proportion of the mill hands, are poor readers, to say the least. I do not mean to say that all our people are such, but that many of them are. It is distressing to hear some try to read passages with which they are quite familiar, or with which they ought to be familiar if frequent repetitions are to help them. Of course such readers cannot be expected to enjoy reading a book. But among such the library has found its way and books like "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "Little Men" and "Little Women" are helping to a taste and practice of reading.

In a town of six hundred people with six saloons furnishing attractions, with the *Saturday Blade*, the *Chicago Ledger*, and many kinds of cheap story papers with their attractive premiums, and large circulation, good reading has to fight its way. But it is making inroads upon the enemy.

With a large percentage of our people crowded into boarding houses without many of the attractions of a home, with another large share, the children, having little help in their homes toward better reading, the library has found and is finding a useful place. The boys and girls, many of whom were previously spending their time upon the streets, have been the most enthusiastic readers.

As I turn to the last library record I find that a large share of the readers are of this class. And it is not an unusual thing to enter a home in the evening, and find the boys and girls reading their library books.

"Little Lord Fauntleroy" has been read until it is all in pieces,\* though the leaves are not torn, and that in only a few months. From house to house it has gone without rest on the library shelves. Miss Alcott's books are also read with much zeal, while not a few boys and girls are learning to read the books of history, biography and science. One of the favorites just now is the "Electrical Boy." It is quite noticeable that many of the readers are becoming more interested in a heavier class of reading than they were at first. This, I consider, one of the good things about the libraries. The later libraries are of a little harder grade of reading than the early ones. They are adapted to the tastes of the people, and they cultivate a taste for better reading.

The young men and young women of the mill are beginning to read. A dozen or more of these are quite regular patrons of the library. And from reading the lighter trashy papers, they are now interested, as I see by the record, in books such as "Humorous Masterpieces," Southey's "Life of Nelson," "Abraham Lincoln," "Electrical Boy," "Charles Sumner," "The Making of New England," and other books of the same class, together with a much better class of fiction than that to which they have been accustomed.

One of these young men becomes interested in a good book. He mentions it to some of his companions. They read the same book and pass it on to others. The process is slow, but I think it is a sure growth and one that will tell in the characters of these young people.

The influence which the library has exerted on the children can hardly be estimated, because without it they would have had little to attract

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\*"Little Lord Fauntleroy" always falls into pieces if it is read and handled by only a few people. Poor binding does more to discourage friends of traveling libraries than anything else, because loose leaves and minor breaks cannot be immediately attended to as in large libraries. The books of some respectable houses are rarely bought for the Wisconsin Traveling Libraries, because they break into pieces in such an exasperating way.

them toward reading, and much to attract them to a life of carelessness and thoughtlessness.

Some of the mill men who do not draw books do read the magazines and papers which often come with our library, while the *Youth's Companion* has thus found its way into many a home which would not have had it unless in some such way as this.

Trusting that I have made clear some of the benefits we have received from Mr. Witter's gift, I am

Yours truly,

A. L. McCLELLAND.

THE THANKFUL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION IN SARATOGA, WOOD COUNTY.

The following letter from the librarian of a traveling library was read at the annual conference of the Wisconsin Library Association which was held in Milwaukee in February, 1898.

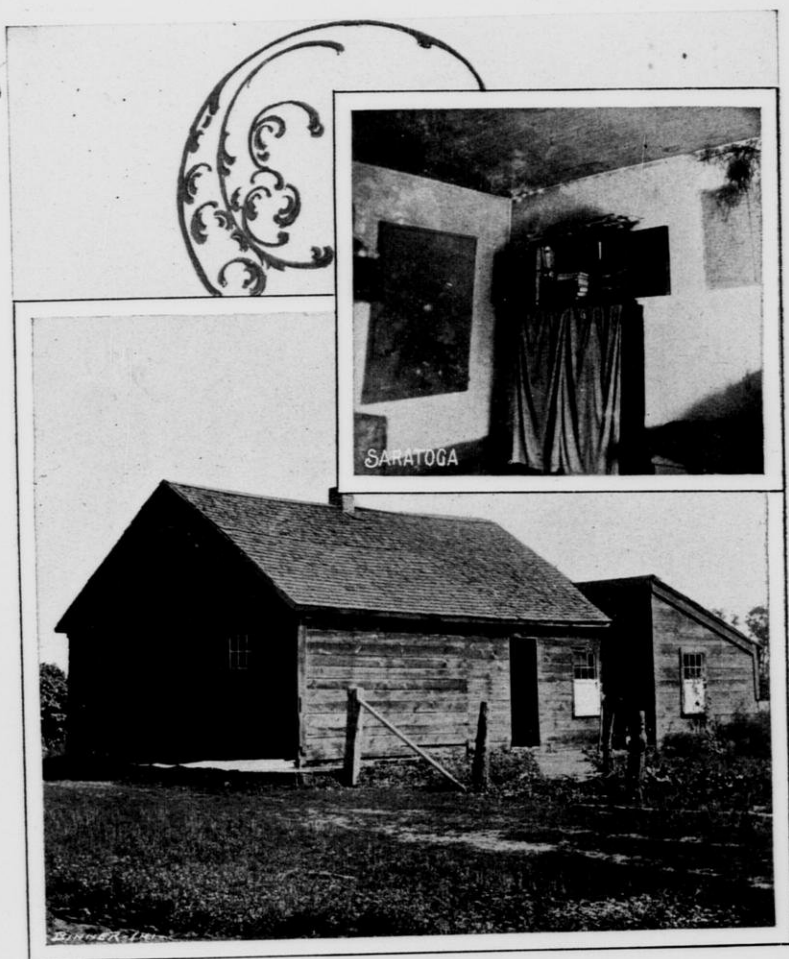
Those who have never been deprived of the privilege of obtaining good books whenever they wished, do not appreciate the blessing they are to those to whom an occasional book comes as an honored guest. You who can have your pick of thousands, little know with what delight one who is debarred from all reading (except newspapers) will devour a chance book which comes in their way. Living in the country twelve miles from the nearest library, I know whereof I speak. I will recall an instance which comes to my mind, which will illustrate my meaning. Several years ago a lady teacher was boarding with me. She made a visit to a friend and this friend loaned her a book. On Monday morning as she started for school she said to me, "There is a book on the table which I got yesterday. You may read it while I am gone if you find the time." It is needless to say I found the time. When she came home at four o'clock I handed her the book which I had read through much to the detriment of my housework. Since that time I have made an unwritten household law that when a birthday was to be remembered, or a Christmas present given, at least one such present was to be a standard book. By that means we have secured over a hundred volumes.

Through the kindness of Mr. J. D. Witter of Grand Rapids, Wis., our community is now supplied with a "traveling library" of forty volumes. It fell upon me to give it a name. I named it "The Thankful Library," for I could think of no other word in the English language which so fully expressed my feelings toward the donor.

I would like to make a suggestion that comes to me — it can be accepted for little or nothing, just what it is worth; that if five dollars should be reserved from every library fund; that is, that many less books purchased, and the money thus reserved should be used to purchase books or magazines, having them come each week or month directly to the librarians of the different communities, they would be greatly appreciated. There are in every little community tots from five to eight years old, to whom such a magazine as "*Babyland*" or "*Little Men and Women*" would be a continual delight. There are other children from eight to sixteen, who would look with the greatest pleasure every week for *The Youths' Companion*. For the women I know nothing better than the *Ladies' Home Journal* and for the men (in a farm community) some good agricultural journal.

I would say for the encouragement of those who are generously seeking to supply the smaller communities with libraries, that the good you are doing is far-reaching and will live after you. Some may be ungrateful, but where there is one such, there are ten who every time they take a book will say "thank you" in their hearts to the men who have so generously contributed to their lasting benefit and pleasure.

(Mrs.) SARAH ELLIOTT, Librarian,  
Saratoga, Wis.



A J. D. WITTER TRAVELING LIBRARY STATION.

The neighbors get their mail in the front room of this dwelling house and may then step into an inner room and borrow a book and magazine from the library, which is mounted on a cupboard. The library is managed so intelligently that it is a continual blessing to the community and especially to the children. See p. 22.



## A TEACHER'S ACCOUNT OF A LIBRARY IN PORTAGE COUNTY.

*Dear Sir:*—By a request to know how this traveling library was appreciated in this district, will say: That taking into consideration the ignorance of a majority of people of the neighborhood to understand enough of English to appreciate English literature they were highly appreciated. The scholars took a good deal of interest in the short stories in the *McClure's*, *Harper's Young People* and *St. Nicholas*. But some of the other reading such as the "Lady of the Lake," Irving's "Sketch Book" and the "Merchant of Venice" did not seem to be at all interesting to them.

They were encouraged to read some of the stories by my reading short sketches to them from different parts of the story and telling them where to find the rest of it. This being the first access they have ever had to anything of this kind and taking other things into consideration, I think it has been a help and success and for one am glad to encourage the placing of good reading in our schools.

## THE SELECTION OF BOOKS.

The following lists of books which constitute two traveling libraries will give a better idea of their character than a general description:

## STOUT FREE TRAVELING LIBRARY NO. 26.

Davis — Stories of the U. S. for the Youngest Readers.  
 Beebe and Kingsley — First Year Nature Reader.  
 Eggleston — First Book in American History.  
 Eggleston — Stories of Great Americans for Little Americans.  
 Scudder — Verse and Prose for Beginners.  
 Lane — Stories for Children.  
 Lang — The Blue Fairy Book.  
 Aldrich — The Story of a Bad Boy.  
 Alcott — Little Women.  
 Poulsson — In the Child's World.  
 Pyle — Men of Iron.  
 Coffin — Boys of '76.  
 St. Nicholas Magazine, 1895; two bound parts.  
 Waite — A Boy's Workshop.  
 Repplier — A Book of Famous Verse.  
 Barnes — Midshipman Farragut.  
 Scudder — George Washington.  
 Wiggin — Polly Oliver's Problem.  
 Deland — Oakleigh.  
 Andrews — Ten Boys of Long Ago.  
 Stevenson — Treasure Island.  
 Furneaux — Out-door World.  
 Champlin — Cyclopedia of Games and Sports.  
 Bolton — Girls Who Became Famous.  
 Lodge — Daniel Webster.  
 Parkman — La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West.  
 Rorer — Philadelphia Cook Book.  
 Myers — General History.  
 Ball — Starland.  
 Cochrane — Wonders of Modern Mechanism.  
 McCaskey (Ed.) — Franklin Square Song Collection No. 1.



Dole — The American Citizen.  
 Peary — My Arctic Journal.  
 Custer — Boots and Saddles.  
 Habberton — Helen's Babies.  
 Burnham — Next Door.  
 Mulock — John Halifax.  
 Blackmore — Lorna Doone.  
 Cooper — Last of the Mohicans.  
 Scott — Ivanhoe.

## J. D. WITTER FREE TRAVELING LIBRARY NO. 18.

Morley — Seed Babies.  
 Chase — Stories from Animal Land.  
 Norton, Ed. — Heart of Oak Book. No. 1.  
 Ariel — Those Dreadful Mouse Boys.  
 Eggleston — First Book in American History.  
 Munroe — Flamingo Feather.  
 Thorne — Jolly Good Times.  
 Otis — Left Behind.  
 Burnett — Little Lord Fauntleroy.  
 Poulsson — In the Child's World.  
 Andrews — Ten Boys from Long Ago.  
 Baldwin — Old Greek Stories.  
 Montieth — Familiar Animals and their Wild Kindred.  
 Wiggin — Timothy's Quest.  
 Alcott — Old-Fashioned Girl.  
 Abbott — Hannibal.  
 Chester — Girls and Women.  
 Cumnock, Ed. — School Speaker.  
 Bolton — Famous Men of Science.  
 Baillie-Grohman — Camps in the Rockies.  
 Grinnell — Story of the Indian.  
 Bolton — Famous Types of Womanhood.  
 Roosevelt — Hunting in Many Lands.  
 Porter — Wild Beasts.  
 Beard — American Girl's Handy Book.  
 Duncan — An American Girl in London.  
 Merriweather — A Tramp at Home.  
 Gilman — Story of Rome.  
 Shakespeare — King Richard the Third.  
 Holmes — Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.  
 Custer — Boots and Saddles.  
 Thwaites — Story of Wisconsin.  
 Black — A Princess of Thule.  
 King — The Colonel's Daughter.  
 King — Marion's Faith.  
 Habberton — Helen's Babies.  
 Scott — Ivanhoe.  
 Scudder, Ed. — American Poems.  
 Fiske — History of the United States.  
 Thackeray — Henry Esmond.

## CARE OF THE BOOKS.

The founders of the systems of traveling libraries have been persistent in their efforts to secure good care of the books and the patrons of the libra-

ries have seemed pleased to do their share. Parents also seem to have been well pleased to have their children educated to use books carefully. The spirit in which this work has been undertaken may be shown by the following copy of a letter which has been freely circulated in Dunn county:

*To Librarians of the Stout Free Traveling Libraries:*

The usefulness and ultimate success of these libraries will depend largely upon your efforts. The books are suited to various tastes and people should not stop taking books because they do not happen to enjoy the first they take. The criticisms of your patrons and your own reading will soon enable you to help your neighbors in their selections. The best of the books for children are enjoyed by everybody. You can get hold of some families of children with the St. Nicholas magazines who would not think of coming for them unless it was suggested to them.

Anybody can get trained readers to take interesting books. Your success will be determined by your ability to train persons who are not habitual readers of good books to become so. Be patient and do not be disappointed if you do not always secure immediate results. Things that grow slowly sometimes last the longest.

Help to train people to handle books carefully and to keep them clean, remembering always that clean hands are necessary to keep clean books. If each patron will keep his book clean all will have a continuous supply of clean books. It is much easier to teach this cleanliness and carefulness while the books are new than when they become soiled. Many people will do well to cover the books they read.

This experiment in furnishing books to small communities is being watched with interest in many states. There is more doubt as to the good care of the books and the length of time they will wear than upon any other points. If the experience of Dunn county shows that the people appreciate the libraries enough to take good care of them it will encourage the establishment of such libraries in other places. Children especially should be cautioned to use great care in handling the books. Good care of books should not, however, be harped upon till people are afraid to use them. The formation of right habits is more valuable than the saving of the money involved. Take the people into your confidence in this matter and they will be glad to aid.

In sending out libraries preference will be given to the communities which return them in the best condition.

Please have books stand straight on the shelves or lie flat on their sides. In returning libraries pack the books so securely that they will not slide or shift. If leaves of books become loose do not re-issue the books but keep them in your possession till the library is returned. If any of your patrons persist in soiling books unduly refuse to loan to them until you write to Miss Lucas for instructions. The cost of each book is shown on the list inside the cover. For loss of book collect its cost and for undue damage collect a fair proportion of the cost.

You will confer a favor by making any suggestions that will lead to the increased usefulness of these libraries.

A catalog of the Memorial Library is sent with each traveling library. If the books of the latter cultivate a desire for wider reading in special lines please send the inquirer to the Memorial Library whose books are free to any residents of Dunn county.

Finally, in all cases of doubt, remember that the purpose of the Stout Free Traveling Libraries, and of the Memorial Library, is "to do the greatest good to the greatest number."

Yours very truly,

J. H. STOUT.

## RULES FOR BORROWERS.

The following rules govern the circulation of the books of Mr. Witter's traveling libraries and are a fair sample of the rules of the other systems:

1. One volume may be drawn by each reader and kept two weeks.
2. A fine of one cent a day shall be paid for each book kept over time, and any money thus received shall be used by the secretary of the local library association for library expenses. No book shall be lent to anyone to whom a book or an unpaid fine is charged.
3. A reader wishing a book not on the shelves may have it reserved for him at least 48 hours by giving notice to the librarian.
4. A reader returning a book which is not reserved may renew it for two weeks.
5. The pages of these books must not be marked and librarians are required to collect fines for injuries beyond reasonable wear. Such fines will be returned with the library to the J. D. Witter Free Traveling Library Association.

## BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND PICTURES WANTED.

All the reading material and pictures used in the traveling libraries have been given by individuals. There is an opportunity for a large expansion of this work and the Commission will most gratefully accept gifts for it and take pains to have them wisely used. Children's periodicals are greatly needed. It will do the boys and girls of southern Wisconsin good to take thought of the needs of the children farther north. Illustrated magazines and papers, both German and English, are needed. Good popular books, and especially books for children are needed. All such gifts may be sent by freight to the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, Madison, Wis., which will pay freight charges. If you have any doubt as to the usefulness of a proposed gift write to the same address.

The Commission will also gladly aid in establishing other systems of traveling libraries like those of Messrs. Stout, Witter and Bradley which radiate from a local center or it will accept gifts to purchase such libraries and will keep them at work from its office in Madison. Such libraries, like the Milwaukee-Downer College Traveling Library, may be named by the donor. They may be sent to certain counties or certain sections of the state, to farming communities, to weak public libraries or, in the case of special collections, to clubs for study.

## MERITS OF THE SYSTEM.

The results of Mr. Stout's experiment, and of Mr. Witter's as well, prove that this method of broadening our system of popular education is both practical and economical. It has the following merits:

1. It makes good literature easily accessible, and often a constant temp-

tation, in communities where there are few distractions and no other similar educational forces for any but the younger children.

2. It puts the control of the reading of numbers of people in the hands of persons who have the library experience of the world at their command, while the literary tastes of the readers are forming.

3. It is economical. There is no expense for local rent, for fuel, light or librarian's salary. Books are bought at the lowest prices, there is no wastage from worthless books or shoddy editions and the volumes are worn out by use and not by mere shelf wear.

4. It keeps a continual interest in the books by frequent exchanges and the prospect of a near exchange keeps each family alert to learn about the best books and to get them promptly.

5. The responsibility of caring for a library and extending its usefulness makes a common bond for a high purpose and a new basis for union for the best citizens in small neighborhoods.

6. The library stations form new centers for the upbuilding of a better social and intellectual life.

7. These stations also offer most favorable opportunities for the great external agencies that make for good. The addresses of the librarians are already on the mailing lists of most of our state agricultural, educational and philanthropic societies and of the department of agriculture at Washington.

8. Experience proves that the system and its purpose excite quick and universal sympathy and that people believe it useful and practical without argument. This makes the work of establishing such systems pleasant and comparatively cheap.

To sum up briefly: the traveling library gives an abundant supply of wholesome literature to the people of small communities at a slight cost, and not only excites their interest in such literature but confines their reading to it until their tastes are formed. It is a free day and night school which does not close on Saturdays or Sundays or for long vacations. It instructs, inspires and amuses the old as well as the young and its curriculum is so broad that it helps the housewife in the kitchen, the husbandman in the field, the mechanic in his shop, the teacher in her school, the invalid in the sick room, the boy in his play and the citizen in his civic duties. It leaves no room for bad literature and keeps it from circulating without resort to threats, by the most natural and wholesome methods.

#### A HINT FOR DISCUSSION.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to repeat what he said to a meeting of Wisconsin farmers in March, 1896:

"Libraries and great educational institutions and charities have been springing up of late years all over the country, but the liberality of philan-

thropists and the great gifts for libraries and education seem to have run in well-worn channels to the residents of towns. For years the world has been making great reservoirs of blessings in the cities, free to all who come, but now comes a new philanthropy, which, indeed, builds a new reservoir, but sends its contents in little rills to sparkle at the doors of the scattered homes of farmers. A careful computation shows that in Wisconsin six out of seven residents of cities may draw books from public libraries without a fee, while such chances are not given to one in fifty of our farmers. But if Mr. Stout's system showers uncounted blessings upon Dunn county, why should not a greater system shower similar blessings over the whole of our commonwealth? If one citizen can do this for one county, why cannot two millions of people do it for themselves? It would be a waste of time to wish for enough philanthropists like Mr. Stout to supply all our farming communities with traveling libraries. In public affairs, as in private, heaven helps those who help themselves. An extension of our educational system to include libraries for farmers as free as those for townspeople, is demanded by every consideration of sound public policy, when we have shown a practical method of securing it at a reasonable expense. Every sound instinct of national preservation and patriotism demands for the masses of our people a fuller education to train them to meet political, social and industrial conditions that are annually becoming more complex. To the man upon the farm even more than to the man in the city, the news of the great movements of the world must come by reading, and the men and women upon the farm, with fewer social distractions than their city cousins, give to their reading more thought and reflection and more general family discussion. The state trains us to read and then leaves to chance both the quality and quantity of our reading. It gives us an expensive schooling for six or seven years when we are mentally immature, and then neglects us when a few cents per capita annually would give the opportunity to carry on a life-long education.

"Is it possible to devise any extension of our system of popular education which will give so much information, so carefully chosen, so accessible, at so small a cost as may be gained by adding free traveling libraries to it? Not one citizen in one hundred thousand could select as good books nor purchase as cheaply, and none could make exchanges of reading as wisely, economically and satisfactorily as all, working unitedly, may do for all."



## THE MAXSON BOOK MARK.

The adjoined book mark is a copy of those used in nearly all our traveling libraries. It was first written for the use of the Mabel Tainter Memorial Library by the late Rev. Henry Doty Maxson, a friend and townsman of Senator Stout. It pleased the boys and girls of Menomonie and led them to handle the library books more lovingly and carefully. It has been adopted by many Wisconsin libraries, and is now used in many states. All who have used it unite in testifying to its refining influence. A book mark is given to each borrower and a new one if the first is lost. The marks are generally printed on colored paper.

## Stout

# Free Traveling Library

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### BOOK MARK

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*"Once on a time," a Library Book was overheard talking to a little boy who had just borrowed it. The words seemed worth recording and here they are:*

*"Please don't handle me with dirty hands. I should feel ashamed to be seen when the next little boy borrowed me.*

*Or leave me out in the rain. Books can catch cold as well as children.*

*Or make marks on me with your pen or pencil. It would spoil my looks.*

*Or lean on me with your elbows when you are reading me. It hurts.*

*Or open me and lay me face down on the table. You wouldn't like to be treated so.*

*Or put in between my leaves a pencil or anything thicker than a single sheet of thin paper. It would strain my back.*

*Whenever you are through reading me, if you are afraid of losing your place, don't turn down the corner of one of my leaves, but have a neat little Book Mark to put in where you stopped, and then close me and lay me down on my side so that I can have a good comfortable rest.*

*Remember that I want to visit a great many other little boys after you are through with me. Besides, I may meet you again some day, and you would be sorry to see me looking old and torn and soiled. Help me to keep fresh and clean, and I will help you to be happy."*



## CHILDREN'S HOME LIBRARIES.

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MISS L. E. STEARNS

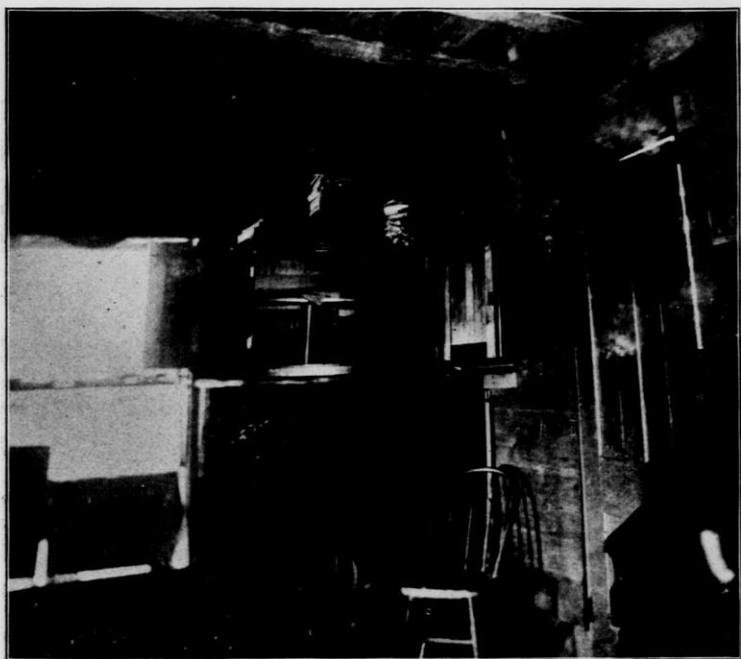
*Librarian Wisconsin Free Library Commission.*

Some one has said, "There is no social principle more hopeful on the one hand, more dismal of contemplation on the other, than that which assures to age the character formed in the first years of life; which makes man heir to childhood's influences as well as to natal proclivities; which makes the reformation of a life next to hopeless when its right formation might have been easy. This principle is the key to the city's problems of poverty and vice. The child problem is, in fact, the whole problem of charities and correction and in its solution will be solved for the next generation all those questions which are today the subject of study and discussion."

Among the many philanthropic movements of the day, toward the solution of the child problem, there is none more delightful in its operation, more uplifting in its influence than that known as the children's home library.

The children's home library is an attempt to reach the children of the poor in tenement districts with wholesome literature. "From dim attics and damp cellars in poverty-stricken sections of populous towns, from ruinous tenement districts in great cities and from cheerless homes, there comes a cry from the children — children who, subjected to want and neglect, are so environed as to command our deepest, tenderest sympathies."

The Children's Aid Society, of Boston, began, about ten years ago, to send little boxes of books and periodicals to the children of the poor in the city. The children were divided into groups of tens and fifteens and one of the larger children in each group was appointed librarian. Such books as Eggleston's "First Book in American History," Wood's Natural History Readers," "Toby Tyler," and Andersen's "Fairy Tales," were purchased and loaned to a little community of children for a time and then passed on, being replaced by a fresh supply. A "friendly visitor" was appointed, who visited the homes, chatted with the children, and conducted quiet indoor



A J. D. WITTER TRAVELING LIBRARY STATION.

The library is placed on a shelf behind the front door and gives no trouble to the family who enjoy having the neighbors drop in for books and magazines.



games, at the same time having an oversight to the care of the little libraries as to their use and management. Over seventy of these libraries are now carrying on their kindly mission in the city of Boston.

This work was soon taken up in other cities of the country, notably at Albany and Chicago, under the auspices of the library training schools at those points.

Inspired by the accounts of the movement in Boston and Albany, the library class of the Armour Institute of Technology determined, late in 1894, to start children's libraries in Chicago. It was planned to inquire through the university settlements, such as the Chicago university settlement, Northwestern university settlement, and others, to learn of localities where the libraries were most needed, and of families with whom it would be wise to place them. With a few exceptions, the work was always carried on through the settlements, but under the auspices of the library class, the members of which became the "friendly visitors" for the libraries. In one case a library was started down town in a district through which the visitor passed daily on her way to the railroad station. The work was carried on in all quarters of the city and among all nationalities. One little girl made a practice of translating the stories into the Bohemian language for her parents. In all cases it was found that the presence of the books in the house had a most beneficial effect. As a friendly visitor writes, "People lived up to the idea." "We found that the parents read the books about as much as the children did; and sometimes a child wished to renew a book several times, because it was being read aloud to the entire family." \* \* \* "Each library made its own rules and elected its own officers. Each visitor planned her own entertainments. We had at our central library several games which were drawn by the visitor week by week. One day, lotto was played in four languages. Some times the children entertained the visitor and the turn about was a great success. We had talks about books, men, and events. Interesting talks were given on all sides of book-making; i. e., beauty in books, etc., which tended to make the children much more careful in handling them. Books were donated by the Children's Aid Society of Chicago, by individuals, a college fraternity, etc. Periodicals coming monthly and weekly were not a success with beginners as the interest could not be sustained. These children of the streets lead exciting lives and many things other children like seem tame. "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was "wanted" badly several times and would have lost some of his collars and curls in the fray. 'Toby Tyler' and 'Silent Pete' were most popular; while 'Adventures of a Brownie,' 'Tom Sawyer,' 'Kit Carson,' 'Daniel Boone,' etc., were in great demand. The girls liked Miss Alcott, Ruth Ogden and Mrs. M. M. Dodge. The boys read Coffin and all the histories they could get."

The success attending these efforts in Boston, Albany and Chicago should commend itself to Women's Clubs, Christian Endeavor societies, and Young Women's Christian Associations, as a fruitful field for philanthropic work; thereby demonstrating the truth of the statement that "it is always through the children that the best work is to be done for the uplifting of any community."

## RAILROAD TRAVELING LIBRARIES.\*

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MISS L. E. STEARNS

*Librarian Wisconsin Free Library Commission.*

Long before the state of New York had taken up the traveling library some of our American railroad companies were circulating books to the employes along their lines. The earliest railroad traveling library, that of the Boston and Albany Railroad Company, was opened in Boston free to all employes of the company in February, 1869, and was moved to the general office of the company at Springfield, Mass., its present location, about 1881. The library now numbers about 3,000 volumes, all of which are for circulation except 500 reference books. Its annual circulation is about 3,000. It has received numerous donations of money and books but it is chiefly supported by appropriations from the company. Its government is vested in a committee of five; two members of the board of directors, the clerk of the Boston & Albany Railroad Company, the assistant superintendent, and the master mechanic. Orders for books are answered every Wednesday, and each borrower may draw two books at a time. Books may be retained two weeks and may be renewed; otherwise they are subject to a fine of one cent a day.

The library of the Railroad Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association of New York city was founded in 1887, by Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt. It is intended for the use of members of the association on the railroad lines terminating at the Grand Central station in New York. Employes of leased lines and affiliated companies, such as the express, and the railway mail service are admitted to membership. To accommodate the men belonging to the association at points along the line of the different roads, books are sent to these associations by train service without expense to the library. The men wishing to draw books for themselves or their families fill out a requisition blank, giving names and numbers of books desired. This blank is then countersigned by the secretary of the local association, and is then forwarded to the library in New York. From one to twenty books are sent in a single package. When ten or twenty

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\*The writer is indebted to S. H. Ranck and A. M. Irving, Baltimore, Md., and to W. F. Stevens, New York City, for data furnished.



books are sent in one lot, a small telescopic valise is used, instead of wrapping books in paper as is otherwise done. The books are all charged to the association to which sent. Then the secretary makes the personal charges and assumes the responsibility for the books. Books are allowed to stay out two weeks but may be renewed. Employees at stations where there is no railroad Young Men's Christian Association are allowed a "special library membership" in the New York association for one dollar per year, and books are sent directly to such members. Printed catalogs are given to all members. From a thousand to twelve hundred volumes are drawn each month. There are about eight thousand volumes in the library, of which one-third are fiction. The wives of the members make excellent use of the books on domestic economy and the children draw books by the various authors of juvenile works.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company established a free traveling library system for its employees in 1884. The kindly spirit which prompted it may be best shown by an extract from a circular letter addressed to employees at the time of the library's inauguration:

"The establishment of a Free Circulating Library for the employees of the company is undertaken in the belief that such an institution will be welcomed by all classes as a popular and desirable measure, and that, through its agency and development, much-needed opportunity will be afforded employees to qualify themselves for promotion and advancement in life, while at the same time their children, wherever located, will have at hand facilities for study and instructive reading matter seldom obtainable outside large cities. This will be done without cost to employees and in such a manner that the books furnished can be utilized not only at reading-rooms (not always convenient of access), but also amid the comforts and society of their homes. . . .

"This library is therefore to be exclusively for the use of all employees, their wives, and more particularly, *their children*. Its mission will be to exert an elevating and educating influence on those it reaches. It will supply current periodicals, standard works on the sciences, general literature, poetry, historical, text, and other books of practical utility to engineers, mechanics, firemen, and other railroad employees, and those especially adapted to educating and forming the character of the young. . . .

"It has been created and will be sustained by voluntary contributions of money and literature from the officers and employees of the Baltimore and Ohio Company and outside friends interested in their welfare."

The library began its work with 4,500 volumes on its shelves, 3,000 of which had been purchased. The first year 16,120 volumes were circulated. In 1896, 2,500 borrowers drew 39,505 volumes from the library. Since 1885 more than 300,000 volumes have been drawn.

"Corporations, like individuals, are recognizing that their duty to those they employ is not complete on the payment of the stipulated wage. Hence it is that relief departments and other helpful organizations are established or encouraged by so many of our railroads. These organizations raise men to a higher physical intellectual and moral plane of life — the very fundamentals of faithful service."

## TRAVELING LIBRARIES AND WOMEN'S CLUBS.

MRS. CHARLES S. MORRIS

*President Wisconsin State Federation of Women's Clubs.*

The interest which women's clubs must naturally have in any system of library extension is so apparent as scarcely to need re-stating, and, all over the land, signs of this interest are being rapidly multiplied as is shown by reports of the work of such associations. In some states these clubs have been instrumental in obtaining legislation favorable to the establishment of libraries.

The movement for traveling libraries appeals particularly to the clubs and literary associations as an educational measure associated with their own organizations and also from a more generally altruistic point of view. The Women's Educational Association of Boston has directed its attention to libraries already in existence but which have not been able to keep up a fresh supply of books, and to these it sends for six months' use traveling libraries of about twenty-five books, making special collections if desired, and being glad to assist study classes. The New York system will fill any list of books sending exactly what is needed for work and furnishes constant aid to reading and study clubs of the state. There were, some months since, one hundred and sixty-six registered clubs drawing books from the university extension shelves of the state library which is under the control of the Regent of the university and a number of clubs not registered had taken one traveling library each. Nebraska has a traveling library managed by its State Federation of Women's Clubs, each member having been taxed ten cents for a nucleus for the collection of books. The State Federations of Kentucky, Tennessee and New Jersey are inaugurating similar systems and, in Michigan, the State Library sends out special libraries to study clubs. In Colorado, work extending over the entire state is undertaken by one club — the Woman's Club of Denver — which has made arrangements with the public library of that city whereby it can secure and send out to clubs books adapted to their courses of study, the Woman's Club being pledged to pay the library a sum sufficient to buy as many books as ordinarily are in circulation among the clubs under its supervision. These examples from other states go to show the value of

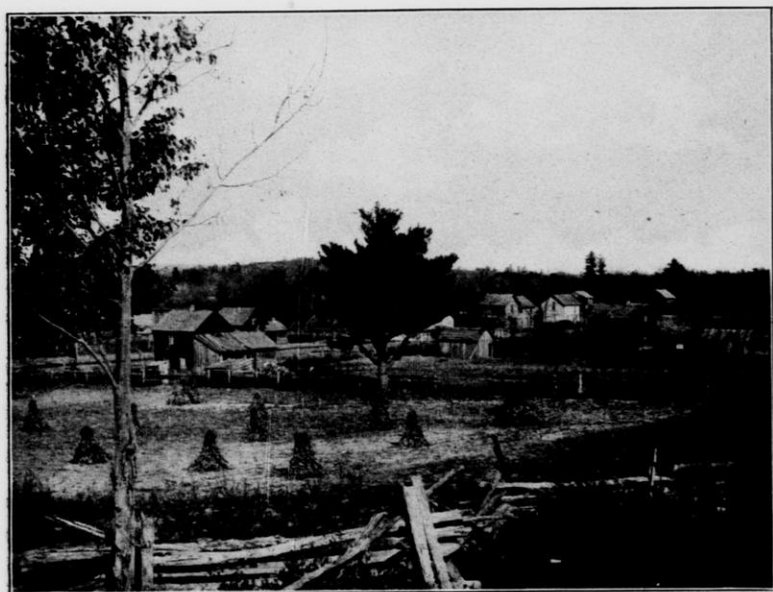
establishing intimate relations between women's clubs and the movement for traveling libraries.

A number of Wisconsin clubs have already made a record in library work, but their influence, collectively, has hitherto been most marked in the sort of appetites created not for aimless, promiscuous reading, but for true mental food. This progress in taste is really remarkable in every locality which has, for a term of years, possessed a woman's club, for assuredly these clubs have been learning and teaching to "see with the mind." And now they find themselves confronted by the question of how they may best aid in extending this enlargement of vision. The answer follows—by making it possible for their sister women throughout the state to organize study clubs wherein may be lighted this intellectual torch which shall illuminate every hearth-stone within its radius, for, whenever anything precious comes into the life of the mother it is sure to be shared by the family circle. And there are many neighborhoods in Wisconsin where farmers' wives and daughters have wished to form study clubs but have been deterred from doing so by the difficulty of securing suitable books. The complex life of to-day demands much more thorough training for the duties of citizenship than would have sufficed even a generation ago. This training of the future citizen should begin in the home; as a child he should be taught to develop his best powers. Hence the mothers must be better educated, their views of life enlarged, their knowledge of the needs of the hour increased, for the future welfare of this country depends upon the education of its people. Here, then, is an opportunity for women's clubs to use the traveling library effectively and, in accordance with these ideas, the Wisconsin State Federation of Women's Clubs is attempting to place in operation a system of traveling reference libraries for the use of clubs in small towns and in rural districts. The collections will be classified on specialized lines of thought and it is designed to have them accompanied by pictures which will illustrate historical events and schools of art, and it is believed, by means of such effort, it may promote the formation of study clubs in every hamlet of the state. Sir John Herschel declared: "Were I to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, it would be a *taste for reading.*"

"Give a man this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you place him in contact with the best society in every period of history. You make him a denizen of all nations and a contemporary of all ages."

The hope of the State Federation is to stimulate this taste and assist in its gratification through the medium of its federated clubs.

The adoption of this plan as a feature of the policy of the federation should not, however, prevent women's clubs from freely aiding in a broader



"AFTER THE SAW MILL HAS GONE."

This collection of houses stands about a mile from a traveling library station. The houses grew up about a saw mill. When the pine was cut the mill went and with it most of the people who had health and energy, and other families have drifted in to take their places. The soil is poor and work is hard to get. Children reared in such conditions need to be touched with the best spirit of modern life. The point of contact may be the traveling library, with its books and periodicals bringing inspiring messages from the brightest and best of the world's great workers. Under wholesome educational influences these boys and girls who rear poultry, live much out-of-doors and help in the gardens would have infinitely better opportunities than their comrades of the cities, but they need a little external stimulus to start their thought and ambition in better lines.



system for the circulation of more miscellaneous collections of books generally throughout the state, as these clubs, because of their network of organization, may become most helpful agencies for procuring books and periodicals and transmitting them from one point to another. Sentiment in this direction only needs a little stimulus. The great heart of humanity is easily moved by appeals in behalf of physical distress or hunger but it is more difficult to realize the need of loosening the purse strings for the sake of supplying mental food. In the rush and hurry of every day life, people with the power to aid the weaker ones do not pause often enough to reflect what a boon a collection of suitable books must be to families in the country during the long winter evenings when they are often almost completely isolated from their associates. Those whom life on the farm has familiarized with this mental hunger and thirst may well bear testimony to the fact that nothing but a traveling library circulating with rapidity can satisfy the appetite for books possessed by many farmers' sons and daughters. Think of the inestimable privilege of being allowed to assist in the choice of the right sort of food for these insatiable appetites, of being able to aid in the awakening of the moral and spiritual nature of the young reader. For not alone as an intellectual stimulus are good books to be viewed. They must impart activity to the higher powers as well. Emerson said "Go with mean people and you think life is mean. Then read Plutarch and the world is a proud place peopled with men of positive quality with heroes and demi-gods standing round who will not let us sleep." How this expansive influence may transform the hum-drum life of the farm!

When these thoughts are sufficiently brought home to the inner consciousness of the club-women of Wisconsin, they will take hold of the movement for traveling libraries with a right good will, for the fundamental idea of club organization is service, and all desire the blessing that comes from "what we share."



# TRAVELING PICTURES IN PORTAGE COUNTY.

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MISS MARY E. TANNER

*State Normal School, Stevens Point, Wis.*

The traveling picture movement was suggested by knowledge of the good which the traveling libraries of books were doing in country communities.

The pictures are various in kind as to subject and manner of reproduction. They comprise flowers, landscapes, marine views, game, and religious subjects in photographic and brown and colored lithographic reproductions. They are mounted behind gray cardboard which is cut to form a mat. On the back of the picture is a small cardboard pocket in which is kept a library card with name of picture written on it. There is also another pocket in which is placed a short written account of the picture and life of the artist. A tape with a brass ring on it is pasted on the back of the picture, furnishing a means for hanging the picture on the wall. On the gray matting in the lower left corner is printed the name of the picture and artist. A stout manilla envelope protects the whole. So far these libraries have been carried into the country communities through the medium of the school, the teacher being asked to invite the children and their parents to the school-house on Friday night, when the pictures were shown to them, and they were further interested by simple talks about the art of picture making and photography and the stories which the artist had portrayed. They were then left in care of the teacher, who is also the librarian.

The children in the school and the people in the neighborhood were made to understand that the pictures might be taken home and kept for a week, when they were to be returned and new ones drawn. Those which were not in use were to be hung in the school room, so that the pupils might derive pleasure and benefit from them.

The plan has worked admirably, everyone enjoying them and speaking in the highest words of praise regarding them. In June when they were returned from the various communities, there came the request to have them again in the fall. Many of the older people among the foreign population surrounding Stevens Point derived more from them than from the

books, for as one old man said in his broken English: "I can read your pictures but I can no read your books."

There is great need of these libraries both for people who have had the advantages of a good education as well as the foreigner who knows little of the English language.

We all of us recognize the difficulty attendant upon securing good pictures of any kind—expense and inability to secure them in small cities makes it in many cases impossible to have really good pictures in the home or school-room. The love of pictures is innate in *all* people and if cultivated may be made a means for moral and intellectual training. There are many people too busy or indolent to read who may be so attracted and stimulated by constant companionship with beautiful pictures as to care to read that they may know more regarding them and the world at large.

A lady of wide experience in library work relates that in a lonely cabin among the pines, a wood-cut of a coffin was found as the only picture to vary the monotony of the desolate walls. If such a gruesome subject may furnish cheer, surely there is need of sending something more uplifting. These libraries may be made to accompany the books, the pictures being chosen with reference to them, thus forming valuable aids in history and literature. They are of value not only in country communities, but in the public schools of cities and among study clubs.

The newspapers and magazines are full of beautiful, helpful pictures which are rendered useless by being stored away in attics or turned into the waste basket. Let us collect and classify these and other pictures and send them out to do their mission of uplifting—of putting "pleasure in the place of fear and pain."

## **The Wisconsin Free Library Commission.**

The Wisconsin Free Library Commission was created by an act of the legislature of 1895. It consists of five members and its duties are to "give advice and counsel to all free libraries in the state, and to all communities which may propose to establish them, as to the best means of establishing and administering such libraries, the selection of books, cataloging and other details of library management."

The Commission was organized December 3, 1895, and proved so useful that the next legislature gave it larger means and duties. It was reorganized, under the amended law, April 24, 1897. It consists of five members; two of them are appointed by the Governor and three are members ex-officio. Hon. J. H. Stout, of Menomonie, and Mrs. Chas. S. Morris, of Berlin, are members by appointment. The ex-officio members are President Chas. K. Adams, of the University of Wisconsin, State Superintendent J. Q. Emery, and Secretary R. G. Thwaites, of the State Historical Society.

J. H. Stout, of Menomonie, is Chairman of the Commission, F. A. Hutchins, of Madison, is Secretary, and Miss L. E. Stearns, of Milwaukee, is Librarian.

The Commission now has a permanent office in the Capitol at Madison, to which all correspondence relating to its official work should be addressed, and where all friends of libraries will be welcomed.

The Commission is not only willing but anxious to promote the free public library interests of Wisconsin and will cordially accept opportunities to give personal counsel and aid. It also invites information and suggestions from all friends of libraries.

A Hand Book has recently been published by the Commission, which gives the Wisconsin library laws, and suggestions to communities desiring to establish libraries. Copies of this publication may be obtained by applying to the Secretary of the Commission.

