

THE
NEW JERSEY SCHOOL LIBRARY
MEDIA ASSOCIATION



1915

LIBRARY
WEST ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL

1971

... highlights of history

A project initiated by

President Paul Anderson and the
Executive Board, 1969 - 70,

Completed under the presidency of

Helen Hettich and the
Executive Board, 1970 - 71, and

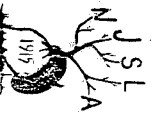
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and son, Danny, student librarian, High Point Regional High School, Sussex.

The Committee regrets the inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and omissions in
this brief historical attempt, and can only hope that the critics who note
them will correct them - in a larger, more complete second edition!



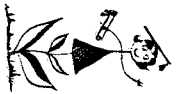
... from little acorns

On March 13, 1915, Miss Elizabeth White of the Passaic Public Library invited the high school librarians of the state to meet in the Passaic High School Library. The purpose of this meeting, which had been suggested by Miss Mary E. Hall, Librarian of the Brooklyn Girls High School, was to discuss common problems and means of meeting them. The April, 1915 issue of *Library Journal* records that the result of this meeting was the formation of "The New Jersey School Librarians' Association," an organization which would include among its members librarians of secondary and normal schools throughout the state.

Let it be recorded for posterity that New Jersey school librarians formed the second organization of its kind in the country; California was the only other state which at that time had such an association. The 15 librarians who accepted Miss White's invitation, and thus became charter members, comprised a large majority of the state's school librarians. The N. J. Department of Public Instruction reports that there were 18 libraries among 115 high schools in 1915!

Though few in number, those charter members were hardy and practical souls. At their first meeting they voted to help the Public Library Commission plan and develop an exhibition, patterned after one shown at the preceding American Library Association Convention, demonstrating methods and ideas for school library work.¹ Perhaps one reason for the scarcity of school librarians was the lack of available training, and the infant organization constantly endeavored to raise the level of professional competence, to establish criteria for state certification, and to strive toward meeting those standards set up by ALA.

1. Lane, Margaret. "Development of Library Service to Public Schools," 1937, reprinted in *School Library Quarterly*, May, November, 1948; February, May, 1949; Fall, 1949; Spring, 1950.



train up a librarian . . .

Apparently, the only training for school librarians in those early days was a Summer School held "with increasing emphasis on children's and school library work" at the Asbury Park Free Public Library and sponsored by the State House in Trenton. Even when World War I made it necessary to discontinue it during 1919 and 1920, classes were conducted in various parts of the state. In 1922 the school reopened in Navesink and by 1926 had become a regular part of the State Teachers Summer School in Trenton, still under the supervision of the Public Library Commission.

A portion of the motivating force behind these moves came from the NJSLA, even in its infancy, but the motivation was stronger in later years. At the Fall Convention in 1945, the Association unanimously voted to recommend that a Director of School Libraries be appointed to the educational branch of the State Department of Education. The wheels of progress move slowly, and results too often come long after the initial action. It was in 1912, for instance, that Miss Sara B. Askew made recommendations which resulted in the enactment of a law in 1914 which transferred the supervision of school libraries from the Department of Public Instruction to the Public Library Commission, at the same time giving them more power. Miss Askew was employed on a full-time basis. Thirty-three years later she saw the fruition of her efforts when another State Legislature created a State Department of Education and within this "new" department, a Bureau of Public and School Library Services. But it was not until the fall of 1949 that Mrs. Jane Hobson was appointed to the post of Library Services Supervisor. Today Miss Ann Voss holds a similar position with the title of School Library Coordinator, and serves as liaison between her office and the Association.

Miss Askew did not live to see the Graduate School of Library Service at Rutgers, which opened for summer school sessions in 1954. But she would have been gratified to know that the Association was represented by its President on the Advisory Board planning for that school.

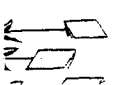
published with pride . . .

Records of some of the early years of the organization seem to be missing - or perhaps members were just too busy getting done what had to be done to take time to get their accomplishments in print. As far as can be determined, the earliest publication was the *New Jersey School Librarians' Association Newsletter*, January, 1934. In the fall of 1941, the *School Library Bulletin* appeared and was published through 1944. This was a single sheet, with printed heading and mimeographed text. No staff names were included.

In the fall of 1944, the Executive Board of NJSLA decided to initiate the regular publication of an official organ of the association. In Vol. 1, No. 1 of the *School Library Quarterly*, President Dorothy Buckley wrote, "It is with mingled emotions of happiness and trepidation that we present to you our latest undertaking. For several years our association has ... wished that we might have some printed record of our aims and accomplishments.... For the present war emergency when travel is difficult and state meetings impossible we hope to give you a kind of 'convention in print' through the pages of our journal." That first issue, edited by Ruth Budd Galbraith, also carried an article by Mary V. Gaver, "Highlights of the New Jersey School Library Association, 1937-1945," which provides almost the only record of those years.

In 1949 the name of the publication was changed to the *New Jersey School Librarian*, which saved embarrassment when lack of funds prohibited quarterly publication. In June, 1960, the minutes recorded that it was moved and carried "to recommend ... that the *School Librarian* cease publication ... and ... a newsletter be substituted." What the minutes did not say was that to those involved, it was like the death of a friend. Rising costs had made the publication under any name a prohibitively expensive venture.

From 1961 through 1964 the Association published a mimeographed paper. The *Newsletter*, edited by Madeline M. Herche, Jamesburg High School Librarian, was a lively, informative publication. After lengthy discussion, NJSLA and the New Jersey Library Association agreed on a plan for joint publication. Our Association was to prepare four pages for each issue of the *NJLA Newsletter*, and to contribute the amount previously spent on mimeographing. The official merger date was April 30, 1964, when Mrs. Jean McDonough became the first editor under the new plan.



The organization was still in the infant stages of development when it made its first change in name. In the fall of 1933, The New Jersey School Librarians' Association became the New Jersey School Library Association, "Making the name more accurate and simple," reported President Oscar H. Mehlerson of the Lawrenceville School. At the same meeting steps were taken to draft a new constitution, which did not prove to be the last one! Fortunately, the old one had realistically provided that four members should constitute a quorum, so it was possible to conduct business with the 16 librarians present.

This last Prohibition Era meeting was held "with walnuts and wine." The librarians met with English teachers at the Shelburne in Atlantic City. Luncheon tickets were one dollar each, and Dr. Will Durant was the speaker.

As the name changed, the membership grew. Those 15 charter members had become the nucleus of an organization that in 1933 boasted a membership of 130. But in those depression years, some dues were "paid in script, if at all."

By 1946, although membership was still 99% high school librarians, elementary school libraries were spoken of and written about. During the war years, regional meetings replaced state-wide conventions, but in 1948 New Jersey librarians welcomed ALA members to Atlantic City. By 1960 membership was up to 254 out of a possible 621, and school libraries were now being spoken of as Instructional Materials Centers! Four more years brought a revised constitution.

Membership topped 500 in 1965, a real jump, and the number kept rising. In an article in the summer, 1969, issue of *New Jersey Libraries*, Louida Vinson, Executive Secretary of American Association of School Librarians, asked, "Are we meeting the challenge?" The Association was certainly trying, for membership had climbed to 752, dues were up to \$10, and it had a new name - to keep up with the new role of the library as the media center in the school. "The New Jersey School Media Association (the N.J. School Library Association) represents a significant change in name and function with real impact for all school librarians," wrote President Paul Anderson.

Is it really so different today? At that first meeting in 1915, school librarians sought each other for the "discussion of common problems"! Speakers at the first meetings discussed "The Most Useful Reference Books for a High School Library"; "Courses of Library Instruction"; and "The Best Magazines for High School Libraries." The theme of another early meeting was "Adaptation of Curriculum to Changed Economic and Social Conditions." Speakers at this meeting asked, "Is our civilization to continue?"

The program at the 1937 Spring meeting in New Brunswick was a panel discussion on "Young People and Books." Mary Gaver comments, "The mimeographed record of this meeting reminds us that the same problems which troubled us almost ten years ago are still topics of discussion when librarians gather today." Overcrowding, intellectual freedom, double sessions, and elementary school libraries were constant discussion topics. In 1952 Miss Mabel Williams of the New York Public Library, speaking on "Our Teen Age Readers," advised members to "Warn readers of the use of profane language, but explain that the men really talk that way"!

Nor is the concern with multi-media such a new concept. The Trenton meeting in November, 1942, was a joint one with the N. J. Visual Education Association, highlighting "the increasing interest of our members in audio-visual aids to teaching." In May, 1944, the "well-dressed school" was urged to have sixteen items, including "Teachers who are not frightened by a motion-picture projector or a radio playback" and 15 other items now standard equipment in good media centers. Substitute "librarians" for "teachers" to portray the changing role of the librarian who is a media specialist in today's schools. Prior to the end of World War II, the ALA report, *School Libraries Today and Tomorrow*, decreed that audio-visual materials belonged in the library and that the librarian belonged in the midst of curriculum planning and remedial program development.

The familiar sound of censorship appeared in 1949, when the school library in Rutherford was attacked for having Public Affairs pamphlets, edited by Maxwell Stewart, allegedly a Communist. President Marion Scott appointed a Committee on Investigation, explaining as she did so, "But in this time of suspicion and witch hunting, the stronghold of democratic freedom of thought is the library. We must be ready to defend it."

Is it really so different today?



... of progress
... progeny
... and projects

As the organization increased in membership and thus in strength, it was better able to tackle the recurring problems of professional training and standards, and to undertake more ambitious projects. At the 1950 Convention, Association members asked themselves, "Halfway to where?" as they discussed the ALA standards. As the second half of the century began, most of the ingredients of discussions for the next twenty years had appeared - only the terminology would change.

At the May, 1951 meeting, Salary and Status Chairman, Dorothy Buckley, reported on a follow-up study her committee carried out regarding school systems in which a graduate degree in library science was not recognized as a master's degree for salary schedule purposes. When Mary Gaver became president of the New Jersey Library Association, school librarians received their first official invitation to attend the NJLA convention!

The death of Jane Waterman in the winter of 1952 was sadly noted by her colleagues and friends in the Association. In tribute to her as a fine librarian and staunch supporter of NJSLA, a memorial scholarship fund was created to continue the professional interests she had so avidly stimulated. Though begun in memory of one dedicated librarian, this scholarship has continued through the years as evidence of the interest of all Association members in supporting opportunities for professional growth. Funds are allocated annually in the budget for an award to be made "to a worthy student in the Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers: the State University, who is planning to become a school librarian."

Nearly a quarter of a century earlier, our busy predecessors had also found time to be tremendously far-sighted. At the suggestion of Miss Alice M. Bible, Librarian of Westfield High School, the New Jersey School Library Councils Association, the first of its kind in this country, was organized in 1929. Miss Mary Ann Clark of Bayonne, Miss Laura Faus of Atlantic City, and Miss Bible met with 150 high school students and their librarians in the auditorium of the Wanamaker Store in New York City on March 23, 1929. From this group, representing 15 schools, they "hoped to

form a nucleus for a real service group to develop book lovers and good library users among young students."

Their hopes seemed to have been well-founded. Miss Lane, writing in 1937, discusses the variety of duties performed by Council members and the vital part they played in the school library. Certainly the reports, which are scattered throughout the Association journals and newsletter, reflect a most refreshing enthusiasm and loyalty. This endeavor is a "first" of which the Association can be exceedingly proud.

In 1954 at their Silver Anniversary convention, NJSICA adopted an official seal and motto, submitted by student members. In 1959 the Association set up an annual scholarship to be presented to a worthy student interested in library work. The Library Council members meet twice a year at various schools and colleges, and publish their own newspaper, *The Counciler*. In 1968 Mildred Younger, then NJSICA representative on the executive board of the parent organization, reported a peak membership of 102 school councils.

Meanwhile, librarians were discussing the 1960 ALA standards while they still struggled to implement the 1950 ones! The convention theme that year was "More Time for Work with Children." The Association sponsored an all-day workshop entitled "The N.J. School Librarian of the Future" at the Graduate School of Library Service, Rutgers University, in 1962.

In her paper Miss Lane makes reference to a Committee on Library Planning as early as 1934, resulting from the stimulus of ALA to provide a national plan for library development. She reported that NJSLA "continued to work on the joint committee with the State Teachers Association...toward making the small library an integral part of the school system."

The arrival of the age of grants and joint-funding, twenty-five years later, gave further impetus to such action. In 1961 the School Library Development Project, sponsored by the American Association of School Librarians, asked various states to submit plans for library development, offering grants to assist in the financing. NJSLA was awarded a grant to work on pre-service and in-service education in the use of instructional materials and library resources for teachers, administrators, and supervisors.

Eleanor McKinney, then librarian at Hanover Park High School, headed the committee which planned a demonstration in the use of the library by a teacher-librarian team in a program sponsored by NISLA in cooperation with N. J. State Colleges of Montclair, Glassboro, and Paterson. In the pilot project demonstration lesson held at Hanover Park in April, 1962, Mrs. Betty Torricelli, librarian at Mahwah High School, worked with a teacher in a team approach to the use of the library as a resource center. On the basis of this initial program plans were made for the next phase of this five-year project, and a second demonstration was scheduled for Lenape Regional High School.

This plan, unique in the library field, was watched with interest all over the nation. Marion Scott and Eleanor McKinney presented a program for ALA at the St. Louis convention in 1964, using slides and tapes of the demonstration programs at Hanover Park and at Ridge Elementary School, where Miss Olivia R. Way was librarian. The following year six librarians put on a demonstration for graduate classes at Rutgers.

In 1965 the Association blossomed into print. *New Jersey in the Classroom*, the annotated bibliography of material suitable for grades K-6, was produced by a committee under the direction of Dorothy Grady. *The Teacher and the Library* was written by Marion Scott. An *Instructional Skills Outline, K-12*, adopted by the State Department of Education, was prepared by a committee under the chairmanship of Dorothea Coachman. These publications, of which the Association was justly proud, have since been revised and updated.

In the spring of 1965 NISLA paid tribute to Miss Gaver for her staunch support and friendship through the years with the presentation of an honorary membership in the Association. Later, members basked in reflected glory when Miss Gaver became president of ALA. Five years later Miss Scott was honored in the same manner at a luncheon on the occasion of her retirement from Rutgers. The affair was held in conjunction with a workshop at the new Hunterdon-Central Media Center, where Alyce Burtis and her staff demonstrated the "new look" for library/media centers of the seventies.

The workshop was a continuation of the Association's efforts to provide opportunities for members to "update our thinking and our professional competencies. This in New Jersey is a problem and the NISMA is aware of this," as President Paul Anderson commented in discussing the need for a program of continuing education consistent with the new standards. The Association started in 1967 with a series of workshops on Media Centers and continued to plan courses and seminars in cooperation with the Graduate School of Library Service and the Rutgers University Extension Division. At the request of the State Board of Examiners, suggestions were submitted to them for requirements for certification of media specialists. Representatives of NISMA met with faculty and heads of library schools at the state colleges and at Rutgers to discuss possible degree programs.

Perhaps this brief backward glance at the tremendous progress the Association and our profession have made since 1915 will, like the rear-view mirror on a car, enable us to go forward with a greater sense of confidence and direction.

PAST PRESIDENTS

First President, 1915- Elizabeth White

Oscar H. McPherson 1933

Marion Scott (2nd term)

Marguerite Kirk

Charles Boltz

Dorothy Buckley 1944

Ruth Wellman Norres

Edward Schofield

Betty Torricelli

Marion Scott 1949, 1951

Irene Logsdon

Margaret Silvernail

Dorothea Coachman

Marguerite Baeethroid

Joan Patton

Eleanor McKinney

Paul Anderson 1969-70

Ruth Cramer

Helen Hettich 1970

President-elect, 1971- Elizabeth Morse

