

Public Library Enriches Lives Of Employees

Use Of Facilities Increasing

To the many citizens who use the Gaston County Public Library, the books and other materials available there are—as Henry David Thoreau once said —“the treasured wealth of the world, the fit inheritance of generations and nations.”

On the other hand, those who haven't discovered the advantages of the library are missing a great adventure in the many services awaiting them at the central library on West Second avenue, its six branch establishments, and its bookmobile service.

The Gaston County Public Library serves a population of approximately 120,000 through books, newspapers and periodicals, educational films, audiovisual equipment, filmstrip, recordings, special texts and references materials, and through adult discussion groups and story hours for children.

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Books are the compasses and telescopes and sextants and charts which other men and women have prepared to help us navigate the dangerous seas of human life.

—Jesse Lee Bennett

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Because circulation of books and the use of all library facilities have increased by more than 33 per cent in the past 10 years, the library has become inadequate to the growing demands for standardized service in the county.

RESPONDING to the acute need for enlarged and improved service, the local government has authorized a special election to be held on July 13, at all regular polling places in the county. Citizens may vote on whether the County Commissioners shall be granted permission to spend \$250,000 to enlarge and remodel the central library in Gastonia and to construct a branch library in each of the other townships of the county. These branches would be built in Belmont, Cherryville, Mount Holly, Dallas and Bessemer City. If authorized for spending, the money will be taken from the “Debt Service Fund” which has a surplus. The other issue of the election is that

a special tax of not more than five cents on each \$100 valuation on the taxable property in Gaston County be used for the support and maintenance of the public library system.

In the past, the county and the city have made annual appropriations, and branch libraries have been maintained by appropriations from the local communities and gifts from clubs, business firms and individuals.

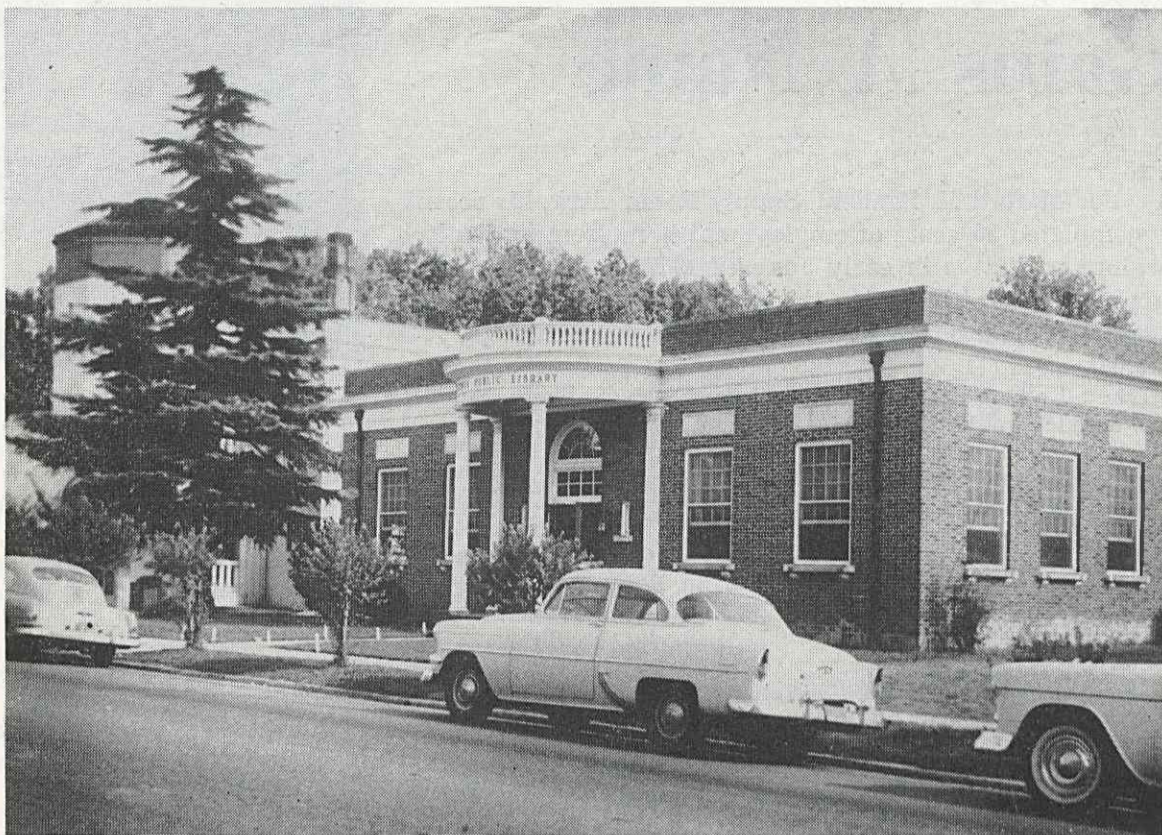
It has been made clear that the five-cent library tax, if levied, would not mean a five-cent increase in the County tax rate, because the county commissioners have already been making an annual appropriation of \$25,000 to the library from a general fund.

THE COMMISSIONERS have said that they expect to be able to raise the equivalent of the remaining two or three cents without raising the present tax rate. This would be possible because growth and expansion of business and industry in the county have meant an increase in taxable property and a like increase in the county's tax income.

Mrs. Barbara Heafner, chief librarian, points out that Gaston County is 6th in population and wealth in North Carolina, but 33rd in library books per capita and 61st in library income per capita.

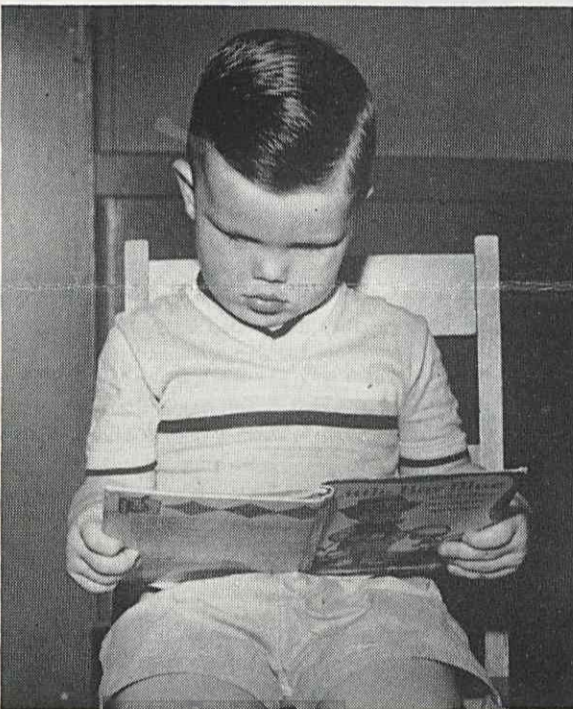
To change this picture, the following goals need to be reached:

1. Wider use of the library. While it is gaining annually, the library is still not used by a majority of the residents.
2. To meet N. C. library standards, at least two books per person in the county.
3. More specialized books in textiles, business, religion, agriculture, homemaking, shop work, and so on, to meet the demands.
4. A larger staff to meet N. C. Library standards and to provide improved and expanded services.
5. Recordings and films in wider variety.
6. Improved and expanded building facilities in every town in the county.
7. Additional branch libraries and deposit stations to better serve outlying county areas.



The Central Library at 115 West Second avenue was erected in 1931. Trustees hope the building will be enlarged and remodeled within the next year. This would be the main project of an

expansion program that would make library facilities adequate for the growing needs of Gaston county.



Adventure—Books are bridges to new horizons. Bobby Pence—whose mother, Mrs. Robert Pence, works in the New Office—explores illustrations of a nursery rhyme book. The library has materials that appeal to members of all age groups.



Bookmobile Station—Peggy Hanna, Purchasing, checks the latest volumes delivered to the Girls Club. Firestone is among the 112 stations and distribution points throughout Gaston County where books are delivered every two weeks.

Service Built On Needs Of Patrons

How long has it been since you visited your public library?

“Books are selected and services planned with you, the citizen, in mind,” Chief Librarian Barbara Heafner says. “In our shelves and cases are books for fun and relaxation, those needed by the business man, for those studying a vocation, and many for study and research,” she adds.

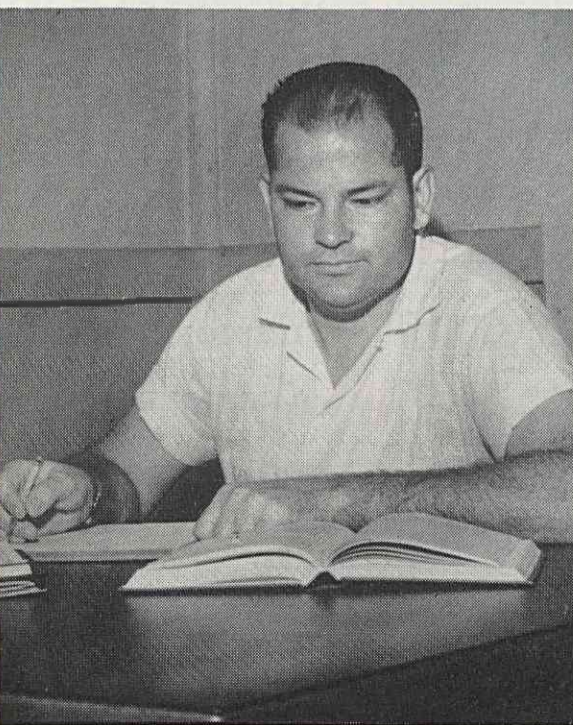
Too, your library subscribes to magazines, newspapers, educational films for programs, recordings to listen to and borrow. It conducts programs and story hours for children and many adults come to join in discussion groups.

The library staff is well trained and in position to select the books you need, or order them for you through the inter-library loan system. Staff members are delighted to answer your questions—or help you find the answers.

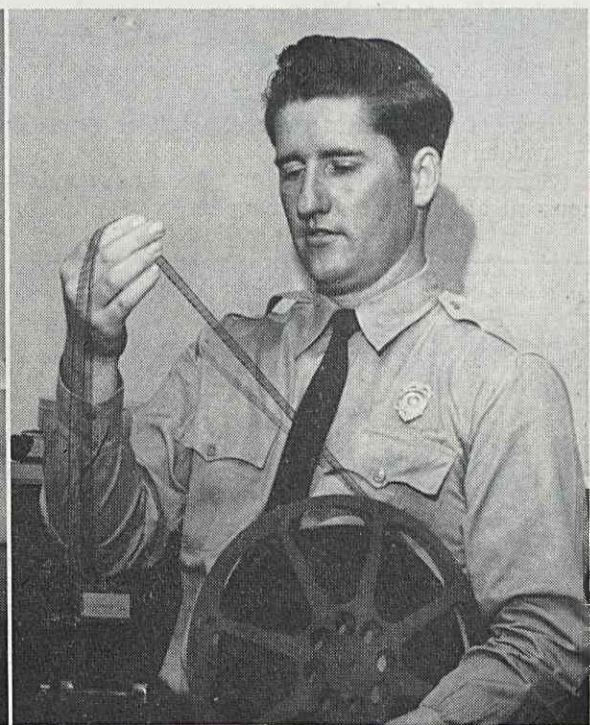
Questions come in many, and sometimes unusual, forms. A housewife wants to know, “How can I rid the place of ants?” Or a farmer inquires, “How can I get plans to rat-proof my corncrib?” Other questions range from “How do I address my Senator?” to “Where can I find a picture of a pre-historic horse?” Most of the answers are in the current reference books and other materials.

From the central library in Gastonia, staff members are able to fill your needs through the several branches throughout the county, and through the bookmobile service.

The library invites you to come in and get acquainted with its services and with the staff.



Research—Luther Brown, Time Study, delves into the technical aspects of machine interference, from a book in the special textiles section. The central library is one of 10 public libraries in North Carolina having specialized book collections on different subjects.



Film Materials—Plant Officer S. E. Crawford looks over a movie film from the available stock of films and film strips at the library. The public library keeps a list of films produced by the Firestone Company and available in the Gastonia area.