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## There's a Book for Each Member of the Family In Library Service Covering the Countryside

### County Bookmobile Renders Fine Service To People of Moore

By Nancy Boyd  
The green truck with the white lettering "Moore County Bookmobile Service" pulled in at the dirt road and blew its horn. Before it had stopped, a door had slammed and two little boys were running down the steps of the white house. Two women and a big yellow dog followed more slowly.

"How have you been, Mrs. Wicker? Did you like your books?" asked Mrs. Dorothy H. Avery, county librarian, as she climbed out of the truck.

The elder of the two women smiled at her, and looked at the pile of books that her daughter-in-law carried. "Oh, they were all good—good books," she said.

While the grown-ups talked, the two boys were dancing around the back of the truck. Mrs. Avery paused. She looked at them as if she couldn't imagine what they were waiting for.

"Paul Ray, Larry," she said, "How about a cake?"

Their eyes glistened under their blonde hair. They watched her solemnly as she opened the back door. There in front of the crowded shelves was a box of cakes and cookies. She handed the boys two cupcakes with fluffy white frosting. The old dog wagged his tail and raised his nose towards Larry's cake. The little boy looked at him relentlessly and brushed a crumb from his overalls. The dog walked away. To receive a cake one must be youthful and literate. On both counts he was disqualified.

**Books For All Tastes**  
While the cakes were being eaten, Mrs. Avery opened up the side doors. Mrs. Wicker, her daughter-in-law, and an older grandson, Junior, looked through the rows of westerns, mysteries, biographies, and novels. While they made five or six selections, they exchanged news with Mrs. Avery. It had been three weeks since the bookmobile's last visit. They talked of the weather, of books, and of a relative that had moved down the road. The little boys looked through the magazines and picture books in the low side compartment.

Finally, when everybody had a book, they all stood on the porch and watched as Mrs. Avery got



MRS. DOROTHY AVERY, Moore County librarian, goes out into the country on daily trips carrying books for every member of the many families she visits. Here Mrs. J. M. Wicker of Carthage Rt. 3, her daughter-in-law, Mrs. S. J. Wicker, and the three boys, little Larry, Paul Ray, and Junior, having turned in their old books, are picking out a new supply. (Photo by Mack Oliver)

into the truck. "Come back soon," they called. "Come back." They waved as the truck pulled out of the drive. The dog looked at them in grudging satisfaction and wagged his tail. Even if he could not share in their pleasure, he was glad to see the happy faces of his owners. Next time he might even get a piece of cookie.

Such a gay, festive atmosphere is typical of the bookmobile's work. In the six and a half years that Mrs. Avery has been touring the county, accompanied by her faithful volunteer assistant, Miss Margaret Bishop, she has made many friends. It is rare that she comes back from these trips empty handed. In the summer the bookmobile returns loaded with everything from watermelons to raspberries.

But the most gratifying "presentation" of all is the continual appreciation shown by her friends. For the majority of the families, this is the first time that they have been able to read more than an occasional book or magazine. As one lady said: "I don't know what the people of this section did before they had the bookmobile service. I never thought that I would have a chance to read as much as I wanted. We have a family and don't have much time to go to the pictures. This is my favorite recreation."

Such enthusiastic praise might have come from any of Mrs. Avery's patrons—the people who wait on front porches, who stand in front of country stores, and who gather on crossroads to welcome the green truck.

#### Children Delight In Tall Tales

To children whose world has been bounded by their father's acres of tobacco and a rare visit to the paved streets of Carthage or Aberdeen, the county service has opened up new horizons—a world of pirate gold, of steaming jungle and wild animals, of fantasy, princesses and glass mountains. The mothers whose days are filled with a succession of household chores have a few hours in the evening in which to rest and read and think. They pick up a book like Betty McDonald's *The Egg and I* to see how someone else has solved problems similar to theirs. Or they read of sailing the Caribbean, of two-barrelled justice in the Far West, or of the magnificent setting and the tarnished morality of the French Court. They have made the discovery that, contrary to the more routine realities of life, the imagination is not bound by the limitations of time and space. Whatever they want, they can find within the covers of a book.

Mrs. Avery reports that, of the 3,200 books that go out a month, many are westerns and mysteries. The children read *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and the Andrew Laing books of fairy tales. The current best sellers are widely circulated. Although some non-fiction is read, light novels are the most popular. The books of Grace Livingston Hill are in constant circulation with Emily Loring and Kathleen Norris following as favorite authors.

Mrs. Hill's novels are highly moral, and her style is more Victorian than modern. The poor but noble suitor gets the girl; everyone suffers terribly, but evil is thwarted, and in the end, virtue triumphs. Even the most priggish could not object. An old lady who had read all 65 of the Grace Livingston Hill novels asked for suggestions for further reading. Mrs. Avery recommended a novel similar in style. The lady looked at her in shocked surprise. "Oh,



"To receive a cake one must be young and literate." So thinks the old dog sadly as he watches his young master, Larry Wicker, of Carthage Rt. 3, gobble up the cupcakes that Mrs. Dorothy Avery, Moore County librarian, has brought him, along with books for the whole family.

#### Nothing Interferes With Reading

Most of the families on Mrs. Avery's route read anything they can get their hands on. They take six or eight books at a time, and claim to have read them before the week is out. Sometimes they have favorites, of course, but usually they say, "Do I like any one in particular? Oh, they're all good." Nothing interferes with their enthusiasm. Even in the busiest days of cotton picking they manage to keep reading. And one of Mrs. Avery's most faithful customers, married in the three weeks since she had seen him, had read his usual quota of five books and was there to receive another five.

Although the majority are interested in all kinds of reading, a few people know exactly what they want. Such is the case with Philip Farmer of West End. As soon as he heard the truck round the bend he was in the yard with *The Little Engine That Could* under his arm. After his sister and mother had made their selections they tried to help him with his. He asked for another train book. Mrs. Avery looked and looked. All the train books were out. His sister picked out a book about a policeman. It had colored pictures of gaily decorated shop windows and the policeman was fat and blue-uniformed. Philip turned the pages, but, no, there was no train. His mother showed him a book about the circus. There were elephants, tigers, and sea lions with long whiskers and a red ball. There was a big bus. But no train. Finally, he asked if he could receive *The Little Engine that Could*. He ran happily into the house with it.

After he had left, his mother explained that they had owned a copy of the book themselves, but that Philip had worn out the pages. Now they were having to borrow it from the bookmobile. Mrs. Avery promised to bring more train books next time.

#### Three Weeks' Schedule

Obviously, the Moore County Library Service has no trouble circulating its 8,650 volumes, the truck carrying about 400, gradually changing during successive trips. Out of the funds, provided half by the County and half by the State, come \$150 a month for new books, so that the Best Sellers reach the customers almost as quickly as they decorate the windows of Fifth Avenue stores.

Mrs. Avery drives 800 miles a month. She takes three weeks to



What's he reading . . . Huck Finn? Ferdinand the Bull? Anyway, this young reader is delighted with his choice.

cover the county, travelling five afternoons a week. Not only does she supply families, who do not have ready access to a library, but every six weeks she supplements nine white schools and ten of the eighteen colored school libraries. Her books are used by teachers as well as students for recreational reading.

Such a schedule keeps Mrs. Avery more than busy, but for such rewarding work she is glad to give her time and energy. Her job is not "work" but a vocation. She would probably do it if she were paid not to do it. The county is indeed fortunate in having as enthusiastic and devoted a librarian.

#### SHAW HOUSE CLOSING

The Shaw House Tea Room is closing this week after a successful season under the management of Mrs. W. C. Deadwyler, Tea Room Chairman. During the summer the two herb gardens and the grounds will be under the care of a committee composed of Mrs. Charles Covell, Mrs. C. A. Smith and Miss Helen Butler.

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