

## LIBRARY ACTIVE AT HIGHLANDS

**Organized in 1884—First Books Procured by Mrs. Louisa E. Wells—Has Co-operation of Entire Town.**

The following short history of the Hudson Library Association of Highlands was very kindly written for the Highlands edition of The Press by Mrs. J. Jay Smith, who joined the association in the 80's and who is now its president.

(By Mary Chapin Smith)  
The Hudson Library Association was started in 1884. Mrs. Louisa E. Wells, of Shortoff, N. C., procured the books, mostly new and valuable, from her friends in Edward Everett Hale's church in Boston, and from Mrs. Hudson's friends in the Unitarian church of Worcester, Mass. Mrs. Wells stipulated that the library should be free to the residents of Highlands, Shortoff, and the surrounding country, and that it should be named for her sister, Mrs. Hudson, who had spent some time at Shortoff and had been greatly interested in planning for increased reading facilities for the people.

It started off sponsored and officered by the most prominent men of the place, Mr. S. T. Kelsey, the founder of Highlands, being the first president, and with a good membership of both men and women. For some years the library which now numbers well over 4,000 volumes was housed in a little old-fashioned closed bookcase with six shelves, which was given a corner in the old school building at Highlands.

In 1894 everybody got busy in the effort to inject new life into this society. It was incorporated, and was provided with new quarters through the kindness of Prof. T. G. Harbison, who, by the way, is a famous botanist and was collector for Vanderbilt for the Biltmore Herbarium, and later for years was collector for Prof. Sargent, the greatest dendrologist that America has ever produced. Prof. Harbison traveled over a great part of the United States collecting for Prof. Sargent's monumental work on trees, and has also done much research work in botany, species having been discovered

the school, and he had built on an extra room at his own expense for his own library which was used by his pupils. He gave this room over to the use of the Hudson Library, and in a very jolly spirit of co-operation everyone helped; it was fitted up with a stove, with fuel, lamps, and all that was necessary. Additional shelves were put in as needed. The school house was newly roofed and painted, the roof and paint being extended to the library room with a refusal to send the bill! And in summer vacation time a small school room fitted with desks was loaned to the library to use as a reading room. There were generous donations from many sources. The Floral and Industrial Society gave \$30.00, and in 1903, having given up its existence, it left by will, so to speak, \$135.00 to the library for the purchase of books. In 1906 the Horticultural Society of Highlands (a splendid society), having died, left us a little cash and a small but very choice collection of books, including some rare volumes difficult to obtain. Individuals and schools, even the distant Smith College girls, gave

books. Summer boarders and summer residents have always shown much interest and generosity.

During the 90's it was discovered that while many valuable books had been donated, the library had also been made a dumping ground for trash that people wanted to get rid of—some of it bad trash. A Book Committee was appointed, and Mrs. Selleck, Miss Staub and I spent for months an incredible amount of time in sifting, rejecting, censorship; rejecting much that was harmful and vulgar, and much that was antiquated and valueless. From that time on there was a high mark set as the aim of the library, to offer the best that science, literature, history, travel, fiction, etc., could give, as far as possible. Very few free libraries in small country places can boast of such a choice selection of the world's best books as this little Hudson library in the remote mountain town of Highlands.

In March, 1895, Miss Albertina Staub was appointed librarian, and in June, secretary and treasurer. These offices she held until her resignation in 1911, and more than that, she also did very much to hold the library and the society together all these years, through times of stress and threatened disintegration. Nor has she ever ceased from interest and labors in its behalf.

The shelves of the little room became full to overflowing, there was not space for a wren's nest, and we must have more room. We bought a lot and began to raise money for the building. For several years we gave entertainments and received unsolicited contributions—by that I mean we did not have to go around with a subscription list. Mrs. M. A. Ravenel at the start gave \$100.00, Miss Warren \$50.00, others \$25.00 and less; Mr. Walter Reese took the contract for the building at \$553.00. Mr. Sloan, Mr. Bascom, Mrs. Charles Albert Hill, Mr. J. Jay Smith, the Town Council, the builder and others contributed doors, windows, fixtures, furnishings, cement, work, etc. Mr. Huger Elliott, one of the directors of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (now of the Metropolitan Museum, New York), furnished the plans; his sister, Miss Lucy Elliott, was very active in looking after the building, Miss Marie Huger did much about arranging the books on the shelves, and the library was opened on the 4th of July, 1915.

We have always had most generous friends; Miss Charlotte Elliott and

have many times given most valuable books; the late Mrs. M. A. Ravenel and her daughters have always helped generously; Miss Warren; the Crosbys; many of the summer guests and residents helped with books, donations and with work in keeping the library open; it would require a catalogue of names to mention all. Miss Marie Huger in addition to other activities was secretary for some years, and furnished the only instance I have known where the records were in great part pure literature and flashed with wit. We enjoyed and appreciated it.

We have for a number of years at their request charged the summer boarders and non-residents a slight fee for the use of books; they wear out fast and it was necessary to supplement the membership fees and donations.

We have had some wonderful librarians; Miss Staub I have mentioned; Miss Lucy Elliott, Miss Charlotte Elliott; the late Mrs. Luther Rice was a marvel; she could get people to read the best things, and the books best adapted to them; the highest gift a librarian can have. Mrs. S. T. Marrett was a great worker and a remarkable organizer; she put the recording of books given out on an entirely different basis, an untold improvement on our old way. Meanwhile, Miss Louise Billstein worked summer vacations on a card catalogue and brought it up to date, but since then several hundred accessions make more work necessary. Two daughters of Prof. Harbison, Miss Gertrude and Miss Dorothea Harbison, are now acting as librarians, and promise to be just as wonderful as their predecessors. We open the library for two hours once a

week in the winter, two or three times a week in spring and fall, and every day in summer. Most of the work all these years has been volunteer work.

Recently we have put in water and electric lights, and have persuaded the town board to give us the water and electricity free of charge. We think we deserve it.

Mr. Henry Robertson, Esq., of Franklin, has greatly assisted us in renewing our Charter of Incorporation, and has aided in other ways.

### Broadway Locals

Mr. E. V. McKinney was visiting Mrs. Andy Wilson Monday.

Mr. Tom Smith was at Mr. Andy Wilson's home Thursday afternoon on special business.

Mrs. Fannie Ballew made a shipment of 315 settees to the Toy Furniture shop Saturday.

Messrs. Columbus Vinson, Dave Chastine and two Mr. Webbs were on Broadway Monday.

Mr. Hayes Bryson is at Scaly with his father, Mr. Thad Bryson.

Mr. Andy Wilson spent Monday night with his brother, Mr. Bart Wilson.

Mr. Bill Brown took a load of produce to Highlands Tuesday.

Mr. Tom Wilson spent Friday night with his aunt, Mrs. Fannie Ballew.

Miss Jennie Talley was in this section Friday.

Messrs. John Brown and Jerry Wilson were at Mrs. H. C. Wilson's home Wednesday.

Mr. Jerry Wilson and Setser Addie spent last week end on Tesenta.

Mrs. Cardelia Talley and daughter, Jennie and two sons, Jipk and Joel, were strawberry hunting Tuesday.

Mr. Lawrence Carpenter made a business trip to Highlands Saturday.

### Nantahala News

Sheriff W. C. Martin of Bryson City, was here Thursday on business.

Mr. Burnette of Macon county, was here Friday selling spectacles and enlarging pictures.

Clifton Raxter of Hewitts, was a Nantahala visitor Friday.

Garland Cole of Hewitts, was on our Streets Friday.

Harley Shepherd of Bryson City, is here this week visiting H. D. Passmore.

Rev. P. H. Passmore went to Kyle Friday to fill his regular appointment Saturday and Sunday.

Cole Sunday.

Mrs. Elda Lee went to Sylva Thursday for medical attention.

Weldon Grant motored to Bryson City Thursday.

Mrs. Sallie Totherton visited Mrs. Roy Wood Wednesday.

Saggie Shields of Flats, was here Tuesday on a fishing trip.

J. L. Arr returned Sunday from a trip to Tennessee.

Royal Lee of Rowland's Creek, was visiting here Sunday.

Fred Day is in Graham county this week working for Roy Wood.

Mr. and Mrs. Harley W. Grant spent Friday night with Mr. and Mrs. Roy Wood of Hewitts.

### Tellico Locals

Messrs. Theodore and Verl McCoy were in this community this week buying cattle.

Mr. Author Ackons, Cherokee Hardware salesman, was in this section Thursday.

Mr. Robert Parrish of Burningtown, passed through this section one day last week on his way to Briartown, to haul tanbark.

Misses Lola and Jessie Ramsey made a business trip to Franklin Thursday. Mr. Charley Smith was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Ruff McGaha Sunday.

Mr. Robert Ramsey made a trip to Bryson City one day this week.

The writer would like to go with Mr. Lyles Harris blackberry picking and see if he could pick 16 2-3 gallons of berries in day, to make his \$2.50.

Mr. Harley Ramsey says he has some wheat five and one-half feet high. The wheat crop is some better than it was last year.

Honorable Theron Slagle was on the streets Wednesday.

Mr. Vergil Smith of Burningtown, passed through this section Sunday on his way to a job at Wesser Creek.

### New Mail Contractor

O. V. Shuler was the successful bidder on the Franklin-Dillsboro mail route and took charge on July 1. He got the contract for \$1,598 per year.

### Dan Tallent Dies

Funeral services for Dan Tallent of Cullasaja, were held Monday afternoon at the Sugar Fork Baptist church, Rev. V. C. Ramey officiating. Mr. Tallent died on Sunday morning as a result of blood poisoning. He was 72 years, and is survived by his wife, and a number of sons and daughters.

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