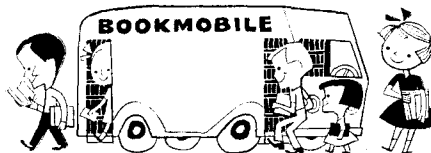


## BOOKMOBILES



**C**IRCULATION statistics compiled by regional librarians prove that when books are available people will read. The problem is to get the books to the people. Last year in Tennessee, for example, 405,000 books were borrowed an average of four times each through 1,069 county and community libraries. A large portion of these books was brought to readers in the state's ninety-one rural counties by "bookmobile ladies," librarians on the staff of the Tennessee Regional Library Service. Like its counterpart in other states, this hardy band of dedicated pioneers covers a wider territory and drives more miles than most traveling salesmen.

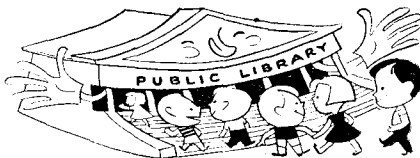
The community libraries serviced by bookmobiles are almost always located in the most accessible spot in their neighborhood, usually in the custody of a public-spirited citizen who handles the books without pay as a service to his neighbors. Frequently they are housed in grocery stores, filling stations, post offices, or even, as in one case, in a police station. A small bank which manages the library for a community of 200 people recently circulated 3,200 books in one eight-week period, and considers this service so important that it includes an accounting of library activity in its regular reports to its board of directors. In another community, rivalry between three stores for the privilege of operating the library became so intense that the matter had to be decided by a secret ballot of the citizens.

In most towns, it is an exciting time when the bookmobile pulls in for its periodical call. There are always willing hands to help carry two hundred

or more books into the local library, where they are immediately placed on the shelves under the supervision of the custodian. While the readers on the spot check out the books they desire, the bookmobile librarian and her assistant check in those for which there is no longer any demand in the community, load them in the bookmobile, then take off for their next stop.

The dedicated librarians spare no pains to obtain a book asked for by a reader, such requests often covering topics as varied as advertising, amateur telescope making, reducing exercises, and plastic surgery. All types of technical books, ranging from radio and electronics to field crops and dairying, from furniture refinishing to psychology and child care, are in great demand. Other favorites are serious and light fiction, as well as books on religion, history, and contemporary affairs. In Tennessee, as in many other states and regions, if a reader and a book have a yen for each other, no matter how far apart the two may be, the bookmobile lady will bring them together.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES



**P**RIMARY among the functions of any public library is that of interesting children in books and helping them to develop taste and discrimination in their reading. To accomplish it, virtually all have set up a continuing program of some sort. Although such programs vary in detail from library to library and community to community, depending on local conditions, one factor is constant—if a program is successful, it is the result of collaboration in planning and administration between parents' groups and the librarians in the children's department.

Over the years, librarians have developed a variety of ways of engaging the interest of young readers. For instance, very young children love to hear stories. So, in order to introduce the small fry to the world of books, many libraries have on their staffs specialists in storytelling who conduct programs that may include the use of films and records, and which may be presented in the library, on the radio, or over television.

Recognizing that a few years make a great difference in a child's interests and outlook, many libraries now

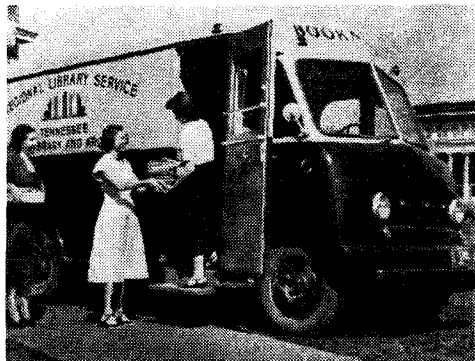


"... to develop discrimination in reading."

maintain separate services for teenagers. This varies from a separate corner in the adult department, as in the Newark Library, to a separate teen-age branch, like the one operated by the New York Public Library. Some libraries encourage their young patrons to write reviews of books they have read. The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore publishes the better reviews in a library periodical. No matter what the child's age, the modern library is ready to suggest books for him or his parents to purchase or borrow; frequently their recommendations include phonograph records as well.

Typical of the library that makes use of every available medium to reach school-age children in its community is the Los Angeles Public Library. In the past decade, industrial expansion has brought a new and large population of young workers and their families to the California city. They live in separate population centers, each with its own business district, scattered over a 454-square mile area. To meet the needs of these rapidly growing communities and their 400,000 children, Los Angeles has extended its library services by means of fifty-two strong branch units and a bookmobile service that tours the Valley and Harbor regions. Children have proved to be enthusiastic patrons of the bookmobiles, borrowing 83 per cent of the large number of books circulated in this manner.

Fortified by their superiors' confidence that they are familiar with the interests and needs of the children in their branch communities, the children's librarians meet each month to review and order new children's books. Older books are constantly



"... from field crops to plastic surgery."

being reevaluated by small committees, which compare them with other books in the same field and recommend the best for wider purchase and use.

Because the enthusiasm of children for books is so genuine and so perennial, the rewards that may be derived in personal and professional satisfaction from working with them are unusually rich. Small wonder that thousands of able and devoted women have been attracted to this form of library service.

## FOR EAR AND EYE



**M**ANY librarians like to think of a library not only as a place where people and books can get together, but also as a kind of "idea communications center." They feel that by using such media as films, radio, television, and recordings, the public library can greatly increase its services to the people.

One library that has adopted this philosophy with notable results is the Free Public Library of Louisville, Kentucky, which considers its mission to be, "To get stored knowledge out of hiding and to make people want it." The Library has a nine-room Audio-Visual Department which doubles as nerve center and materials warehouse for a variety of activities that have become an integral part of the city's educational system from primary grades through the university. Programs designed and used by teachers in their daily classroom work are transmitted over the Library's 250-watt FM radio station, WFPL, the first in any library in the country, and through the Library's forty-outlet leased wire network. Thanks to the network it can pipe into classrooms throughout the city tape or platter recordings (drama, history, radio panels, documentaries), and is able to service the forty outlets with as many as forty different programs at the same time.

WFPL, which operates sixteen hours a day, every day, will soon be joined by a second Library FM station, 3,000-watt WFPK, the transmitter for which was donated by the owners of a commercial station that has discontinued operations. A 380-foot tower is now being built for WFPK on the property of the main library.

Recordings used on the network, on the radio station, and in other ways



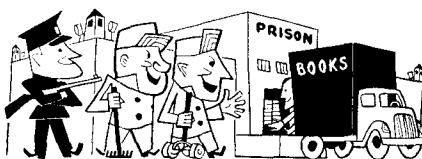
"To make people think more."

are kept in the Library's audio archive. There are more than 25,000 of them in all, on discs and in some instances on tape. The Library owns virtually every LP record title produced by any major company in the world since the process was invented. "Dubbings" are made of master discs and other recorded materials so that no item will be destroyed by wear.

Another activity of the Louisville Library's Audio Visual Department is the Film Forum, now in its sixth season. Through the year feature films on such subjects as art, history, and the dance are shown, illuminated by the comments of a guest authority in the field. Each program closes with general discussion by the audience. The film library itself contains nearly a thousand educational films and hundreds of film strips. These may be borrowed by groups in the city or shown to them by appointment in the library studios or at branch libraries.

Librarians do not intend that these activities serve as a substitute for what should be the chief function of a library, the lending of books and reading materials. But they do believe that they serve eminently well the fundamental purpose of the true public library—to "make more people think more" and to provide the community with a cultural center.

## BOOKS BEHIND BARS

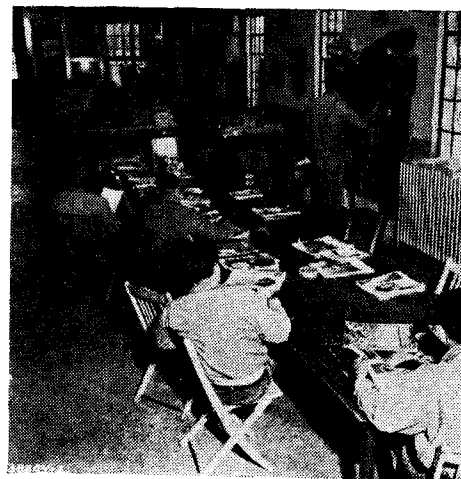


**T**HESE days a number of public libraries, cooperating with the prison authorities in their community, are working to bring the world inside the prison. Typical of this effort is that

currently taking place at the Detroit House of Correction, a prison housing about a thousand men and four hundred women serving sentences ranging from ten days to life. For many years the prison library consisted of an antiquated and hodge-podge collection of books that had been donated. Then, in 1948, the Detroit Public Library began the practice of depositing collections of books there, in the charge of inmate librarians selected for their education, interest, and stability. Prisoners were allowed to borrow as few or as many books as they wished.

The results have been gratifying. Today the prison library contains a revolving collection of approximately 3,500 books. Once a month a Public Library staff member visits the prison to bring new books the librarians believe will interest the inmates and volumes they have especially requested, to withdraw titles no longer usable, and to discuss book requirements and administrative problems with inmate librarians. Books are chosen that will fill the special needs of the prisoners. To satisfy the craving of the average inmate for action and escape, the Library supplies Westerns, mysteries, sports stories, humor, and travel books. As most prisoners come from inadequate or shattered family backgrounds, it sees that the prison collections are well supplied with fiction, biography, and plays which show the satisfactions that come from membership in normal, happy families and communities.

Most prisoners have an extraordinary interest in themselves and their own mental processes. Often they are groping for explanations as to where and why they took the wrong turn. The library tries to satisfy this craving with books on religion, philosophy, psychology, physiology and hygiene, and on such special problems as alcoholism, anxiety, and fears. How-to books about typewriting, auto me-



"Prisoners have an interest in themselves."