

VANPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
Report for November 1944

The other day two Negro boys of high school age came into the library and asked us to settle an argument for them. One felt sure that no Negroes had fought in the Civil War on either side, but had "just sat back and waited to see what happened." The other was sure that they had been participants because "my pop has a sword that his pappy fought with in the Civil War." These boys were both from the South, and when we showed them that Negroes had fought on both sides in that war, they went away convinced but frankly bewildered.

We were elated to have a new patron tell us recently that when she first came to the library and saw our fine collection of books, she was "as happy as if I had struck a gold mine." However, our elation is considerably diminished whenever we contemplate our far too many delinquent books. Two days ago we decided direct action was necessary (we have been promised the cooperation of local Boy Scout Troops in picking up books, but so far they have not appeared); Therefore, we set out on foot to visit the apartments of our delinquent borrowers. In a little more than an hour, with slight damage to our shoes and disposition from the ever present mud, we collected nearly \$20 worth of our books! Up until now we have hesitated to knock on apartment doors believing that we would create too much ill will by waking up graveyard shift workers, but weather permitting, we shall set out in another direction this next week.

Among interesting patrons we have talked to during the month, we were particularly impressed with the man who worked on the Alcan highway from its start until a few days before it was finished. He painted a graphic picture for us of working conditions in the Far North, and the significance of the highway in our post-war relations with other countries.

Another of our patrons informed us that he is a writer of children's stories, but that for relaxation he reads mysteries!

The inventory of our collection begun last summer is completed. We find that we have lost only 40 books. This of course does not include these many books which patrons have charged out in the regular manner and then carried away from the project with them when they moved. Bibles and dictionaries as usual are most noticeable among those missing in non-fiction. Only 11 novels have disappeared from our shelves during the past year, and since this is largely a fiction reading public (the percentage hovers around 70%) we are happy to conclude that Vanportians must be relatively honest folk.

During the month, the librarian gave book talks before two groups of the American Association of University Women, one in Vancouver and one in Portland. Since both groups had heard us speak last year about the Great Adventure of Vanport, they were curious to know how things were progressing. We were shocked to learn how few of the women in either group have actually visited Vanport.

The heating engineers complain that when we leave our front door open, it is impossible to keep the building warm. Our patrons, on the other hand, complain that when the door is shut they think the library is closed, and they go by without trying to come in. To pacify all concerned, we now keep the door closed and have a large light in front with the word "open" written on it. It looks vaguely unprofessional to us, and was strictly a maintenance suggestion, but we are willing to wait and see if it solves our problem.

Mrs. Sallila who is in charge of our small Branch at East Vanport, reports that thanks to community help, she is now able to keep the library

open five nights a week (Monday thru Friday) from 7 until 9. During November 176 books were circulated there, chiefly fiction, although she has requests constantly for books on the Negro. Patrons have also asked for the Negro Digest and we would be very happy if some kind person would donate a subscription to the library. — at East Vamport

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Touhey
Eleanor Touhey, Librarian.