1950

History of the Carolinas Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries

Dillard S. Gardner

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ANOTHER FABLE OF THE FAGGOTS

Dillard S. Gardner

Five centuries before Christ a hump-backed, Phrygian slave wrote in Greek many fables, some probably original but many dating back to the cradle-days of history. One of the wisest of these told the story of the father who called his sons together and showed them a bundle of faggots. Each of them tried to break the faggots, but all failed. Then the father untied the bundle and taking the faggots one by one he easily broke them. He then turned to his sons, "I am old and will not long be with you. My sons, always remember the faggots!" This is another fable of faggots:

On Friday Oct. 16, 1937 Miss Lucile Elliott, librarian of the School of Law, University of North Carolina, presided at a meeting of the law librarians of North Carolina. She had sent out the invitation notice, but it was plain that she had the strong encouragement of William R. Roalfe, the able law librarian of Duke University. Both of these individuals deny the major credit for the idea, but it is certain that whichever suggested it, the other quickly agreed with enthusiasm, but Miss Elliott certainly took the initiative.

At this meeting Mr. Roalfe, who had come to Duke from the University of Southern California Law School in 1930 to administer the rapid expansion of the Duke Law Library from the little law library of Trinity College, brought with him his entire staff: Miss Mary S. Covington, Misses Day, Mangum and Long, and Mrs. Walker. Present with Miss Elliott from Carolina was Mrs. Ben G. Lumpkin. Mr. Donald Gulley, librarian of the Wake Forest Law School, and Dillard S. Gardner, one of Miss Elliott's former pupils, librarian and marshal of the N.C. Supreme Court, completed the list in attendance.

Miss Elliott with Mr. Roalfe pointed out the advantages of such meetings once or twice a year in the interest of fellowship, exchange of ideas,
co-operation in projects of benefit to all. Mr. Roalfe invited the group
to Duke Feb. 4, 1938 and Mr. Gulley and the author were designated to
assist Mr. Roalfe in working up the program for the meeting. The group
immediately drifted into "shop-talk", discussing problems that had arisen
and seeking advice in their different fields. It immediately became evident
to everyone that just such meetings were needed to pull the individuals
out of their cloistered isolation and to keep them in touch with what is
happening in neighboring libraries. The libraries represented agreed to
prepare lists of their materials to be distributed at the February meeting.

The Feb. 1938 meeting, with the same group in attendance, was an
all-day occasion. The Supreme Court Library and Carolina Law Library lists
were distributed. Mr. Roalfe distributed charts showing his library
organization and a tour was made, each of the staff members explaining
their work. Dean Horack encouraged the group to organize and begin work.
The name "North Carolina Law Librarians" was adopted, Mr. Roalfe made
Chairman and Miss Elliott, secretary. The Charlotte and Asheville libraries
had sent no representative and letters from those areas indicated that
the librarians either felt contemptuous toward, or fearful of, working with
other law librarians. The author was appointed to gather lists of discarded
materials such as advance sheets, Shepard's citations, etc. to offer to
the non-co-operating libraries as friendly gestures. Gulley and Gardner
asked the group to divide the next meeting between their libraries.

At the June 1938 meeting, the Supreme Court and Wake Forest libraries
were visited. The author located the Catawba Law Library at Newton and Hickory
and more information about the other local law libraries, but none were
interested in discarded materials - seemed rather offended at the idea. It
was decided to limit the meetings to a half day, twice each year. Miss
Covington presented the need for someone to complete the Index to our N.C.
Bar Ass'n Reports, and Mr. Gulley was designated to bring up-to-date the
index to memorials in the back of the N.C.Reports. The secretary was designated
to provide publicity for the meetings.

The first year had been a successful one. The secretary added at the bottom of the minutes:

"Editorial Note. As a whole the group felt that the all-day meetings had served to acquaint the group with each individual library and each librarian. Watching the work of other libraries and pooling our ideas and discussing common problems had injected new life into each one and it seemed to all that our coming together had formed the nucleus of a working group that would in time grow into power for our own protection and for the profession."

At the October 1938 meeting at Chapel Hill, Miss Strickland, librarian of the law school at U. of S. C. attended as a guest, was invited to join, accepted, and the anem of the group was expanded to "Carolina Law Librarians."

Mr. Carl White, the Carolina librarian, addressed the group.

And so the group moved into a more regular and routine procedure, with two half-day meetings each year, rotating from one library to another - Carolina, Duke, Supreme Court and Wake Forest. Various projects and reports were completed from meeting to meeting. Mrs. Lumpkin ultimately, with the aid of the author, expanded the index of memorials in the N.C. Reports to include an index by author as well as by subject and to include advisory opinions and this was published in the back of Vol. 214 N.C. Miss Elliot completed the index to N.C. Bar Ass'n Reports and it was published in the Am. L.L. Ass'n's Index to State Bar Reports. Publicity was given gifts to the libraries. Through the State Bar groups efforts were made to encourage local bar libraries and reports of special committees on this appear in N.C. Bar Ass'n Reports from 1940 forward. Lists of recommended law books for N.C. law library valued at $2,000, at $3,000 and at $5,000 were prepared, publicized, revised several times, and widely distributed. In April 1939 the author was elected president; later Miss Covington, Mr. Gulley, Miss Elliott, Miss Holt, who succeeded Mr. Gulley at Wake Forest, and Miss Leverette, of the U. of S. C. Law School, all served terms as president.
At the Oct. 27, 1939 meeting in Raleigh, Mr. Roalfe urged our affiliation as a chapter with the Am. L.L. Association. To the advantages of being a part of the official national organization was added some financial benefit to the chapter and the privilege of withdrawing at any time we wished to do so. We joined, becoming the first local chapter — the Carolinas Chapter of A.L.L.A. Miss Strickland, sick at the time of this meeting, later died, our first death in our membership.

At the May 1940 meeting Judge Robert Winston's paper "Law Libraries Fifty Years Ago" was read. Judge Winston has since died. Mr. Roalfe drafted our by-laws for entrance into the association, and they were adopted. At the Oct. 1940 meeting Miss Mildred Doe, the new law librarian at U. of S.C., and Mrs. L.G. Johnson, assistant at Duke joined us. Reports were made from the W.P.A. project and by Mrs. W.J. Peete on these two undertakings to index the local laws; the Chapter supported and encouraged Mrs. Peete and continuously urged the Secretary of State to press this to publication, which since has been done. Through Miss Doe's efforts, it was found that local bar libraries at Anderson S.C. and Greenville, S.C. were the only two in South Carolina; the latter was begun by the purchase by the local Bar Association of the Furman University law library some years ago and is supported by annual dues and $1.00 library fee in court costs, a paid librarian being in charge. With close co-operation from the group, the Stanly Co. (N.C.) Law Library was established, and the Kinston bar made some efforts in the same direction. Full reports were made by each library as to their exchange policies. Miss Elliot, at the Oct. 1941 meeting, moved that we invite the negro librarian of the law school at N.C. College, but this action was tabled in the absence of Miss Doe. At the April '42 meeting it was decided to meet once a year during the war, and after the May '43 meeting, there were no further meetings until May 1943. Miss Carrie McLean, of Charlotte, spoke to the '42 meeting on the need for expanding the work of the Chapter. Miss Long presented to the group her check-list of N.C. legal materials, a very much needed aid in this field. Word of the establishment of other chapters of the Association was reported.
The '43 meeting was given over to a discussion of the impact of war on the libraries and the need for planning for the post-war expansion. Mr. Roalfe, Mr. Gulley and Miss Bethea left us at this time.

In May '43 meetings were resumed, this time at Greensboro to permit the members to make a tour of the Ruszicka Bindery. The Guilford County Law Library, Inc., through Settle Graham and Charles Ivey, joined us at that time; this library was visited and the members undertook to advise and assist this new library in a number of ways. Neither Duke nor U. of S.C. was represented at this meeting, and when we met in the fall Miss Elliott was in Europe but Miss Kate Wallach represented her. Miss Long was tendered the presidency, but upon her refusal, Miss Elizabeth Holt, new Wake Forest Law Librarian, accepted it. Work was begun on a complete revision of the old "model" library lists to bring the prices and editions up-to-date, and Miss Holt began the preparation of a buying list, showing discounts, terms, practices, etc. of the different law book dealers serving this area, and later the other members supplemented her work before the final list was mimeographed for distribution. At the '49 meeting in Chapel Hill, Miss Leverette, of the U. of S.C. Law School, became president and her assistant, Miss Sims, became secretary-Treasurer. They invited the group - for the first time - to meet in South Carolina in the fall of 1950. Thus, the group moved into the third period of its growth, and, it is felt with confidence, a new period of expansion in both membership and usefulness.

If anyone doubts the value and usefulness of the group in the past, he or she need but read the minutes of our sixteen meetings. Skimpy and inadequate as the minutes are, they reveal a record of a wide range of discussion and of solid achievement. The letters, articles and reports in our files are still richer sources on our interests and activities. It is strongly urged that the secretary be instructed to sort this material in folders by years, and that on the inside of each folder be prepared and pasted an abstract of the contents of the more important letters, reports, and articles. Many of the ideas expressed
are still both interesting and useful; this is lost entirely to the new members and many of the older members have forgotten much of this already-rich tradition of our little group. May we long continue as a quiet but powerful leaven at work for the law library and legal profession in our two states, steadily though gradually pressing for improved materials, practices and ideas. Let each goal achieved be not the journey's end, but an oasis for the night where we pause to refresh ourselves for the challenge of the morrow. As a group and as individuals, may the completion of each task at hand be not the twilight of our efforts, but merely the setting of a day's sun in the promise of the sunrise of tomorrow.