

Nebraska Needs More Bookmobiles

1954



The school children anxiously awaited the arrival of the bookmobile each month. The bookmobile is pictured upon arrival at District 34, southeast of Beatrice.

GAGE COUNTY boys and girls have done a lot of reading this last school term since a bookmobile has been traveling around the county.

This bookmobile is the big news at the Nebraska Public Library Commission and was on loan for the 1953-54 school year to the Beatrice Public Library. A demonstration of county wide service to the rural schools was carried on throughout the school year.

What is a bookmobile? It is a small library on wheels, or a traveling library which runs on a regular schedule, at announced times and dates, to villages, crossroads, stores, schools and rural communities.

This new bookmobile was given to the state library commission by the Woods Charitable Fund. It is to be used to give demonstrations of improved library service, usually on a countywide basis. Having a capacity of 1600 books, magazines and pamphlets, it also is equipped with several sets of encyclopedias.

More than 2000 children in Gage county borrowed books from the bookmobile during the past school year. Each child came into the traveling library when it arrived at the school grounds and made his own choice of the book he wished to borrow for a month. When the bookmobile returned a month later, he checked in his book and borrowed another.

Mrs. Dale Workman and Mrs. Alvin Neujahr, Beatrice, who took the bookmobile around to the schools in the county found their work in this traveling library very similar to their previous library work. The bookmobile was always a comfortable temperature because of the adequate heating system and ventilators. The driver's seat turns around to double as a desk chair for the librarian.

Let School Know

The procedure they followed was that of letting the school know what half day of the week they could expect them. Upon arrival at the school, the teacher was asked to send a few children out at a time. Many of the teachers did not come out to the bookmobile regularly as the children preferred choosing their own books. Mrs. Workman checked in the books as the children entered the bookmobile and Mrs. Neujahr gave help in selecting a book or finding a certain book, if asked, and then checked out the book for each child.

The children were delighted with the opportunity of selecting their own books from this library on wheels. One small boy, on the second visit of the bookmobile was the first child up the steps to check in his book, and he began saying, "I won, I won." When one of the "bookmobile ladies", as the young-

sters called them, asked what he'd won, he replied, "More kids read my book than any one else's."

Horse and dog stories were the most popular with these young readers. Very few of the children paid much attention to who the author was. Occasionally someone liked a book well enough that he inquired as to whether or not that author had written any more books. Boys and girls of high school age preferred mystery books.

There are three bookmobiles in Nebraska—one in Phelps county which belongs to the Phelps County Library; one in Omaha which operates as a traveling branch of the Omaha Public Library; and now, one demonstration bookmobile at the Nebraska Public Library Commission.

More Bookmobiles Needed

Nebraska needs more bookmobiles and more libraries to make books and reading available to every citizen in the state. About a half million residents of the state are without local library service. The only service available to them is by mail from the state library in Lincoln.

This demonstration bookmobile is available for loan to public libraries or county superintendents or interested groups, such as home extension clubs, that wish to sponsor a demonstration of extended library service.



Mrs. Alvin Neujahr, Beatrice, one of the "bookmobile ladies," shows a new dog story book to Leonard Frantz, Holmesville (right). Jolene Ideus, Holmesville, is busy making her selection.



"I like books," says Patty Kay Wrightsman, Holmesville, (center) as she checks her book in to the librarian, Mrs. Dale Workman (left). Agreeing with Patty Kay is Eugene Orr, Holmesville. Both Patty and Eugene are in the kindergarten.