

July 28, 1964

TO: Mississippi Summer Project Librarians

FROM: Library Co-ordinator Virginia Steele
901½ Nelson Street 335-2173
Greenville, Mississippi

RE: Accomplishments, Problems, Suggestions

I. Acknowledged: No previous co-ordination efforts. Suggest you sound off about it. Would relieve you and me, too.

II. I would like to circulate a resume of the response to this communication. Please give your best thought and the most complete information. (Don't be ashamed of what you think you haven't done. All of us have had unforeseeable problems, made radical reversals of decisions, etc. If you have any books out for use at all you may have done nobly to get them there.)

III. Questions (guide). (Answer on sheet.)

Library

1. Where is library located:
 - a. address
 - b. describe location & situation
 - c. give appx. room space
 - d. --shelf space
2. How is library being used?
 - a. circulation figures, if possible
 - b. description of use
 - c. hours open
 - d. classification & shelf arrangement
 - e. cataloging
 - f. circulation procedures
3. Other comments

Book Stock or Collection

1. What books are being used the most?
2. What kinds of books have you gotten?
3. How did the books come to you?
4. Have you sent any to other places?
5. How many books are in storage (indicate boxed or unboxed:
 - a. sorted
 - b. unsorted
6. What kind of storage place are the books in:
 - a. address, if not at center:
 - b. space & condition of place (rats, leaks, mildew danger, etc.)

7. Unusable books

- a. What percentage are unusable?
- b. What are your criteria?
- c. What do you do with them?
- d. Your ideas for discards
- e. Your ideas for good books stored because of lack of room or not appropriate for use

Acquisition

1. What kind of books do you want more of?
2. What have you written for or wanted to get in way of other library materials

--books

--magazines

--newspapers

--pamphlets

--pictures

--college catalogs

Survey of Libraries

--scholarship & information on aid

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--teaching materials

--other

3. What have you gotten that wasn't worth writing for?

Services

1. Do the Freedom School teachers ask for your help, or do you initiate any service for them? (Ex.: checking textbooks for pertinent material, as a sociology text with an account of the Chicago race riot in 1919, or making available John Gunther's Inside USA--one of the rare, honest, earlier accounts of Negro life--early like post-WWII; or John Woolman in the English Lit. books.)

2. Any special service for voter registration people, or others?

3. Does the library offer a story hour for children?

4. Does the library sponsor any book talks, reviews, etc?

Where are they held?

Are the Negro Life books (including history) presented?

Services (contd.)

5. Do you get your local newspaper?
Would you like to get the Delta Democrat-Times
(Hodding Carter's newspaper)?
6. Do you have a bulletin board?
7. Do you clip newspapers or post bulletins?
8. Do you mark magazine articles about race, Negroes,
Civil Rights, the Movement, etc., and put out in
an open file? What is your method?
9. Other

Use

1. Circulation. Describe & estimate
Adults
Children
Teachers, VR people, etc.
2. Who is using the library?
3. Who is not using it?
Do you know why?

Participation

1. How much community participation is there in the
operation of the library. Specify adults, young
people, children.
2. Proposals for increased participation.
3. Who helps you?
4. Any help from your own personal contacts elsewhere?

Future

1. What are the future plans for your library?

Supplies

1. What kinds of supplies have you used?

Needed?

Wanted?

Problems

Would you list specific problems you've solved...not solved:

Ideas, suggestions, comments, news, etc.

What do you think a library coordinator ought to do? (Speak
up, you can't be fired you know!)

 Your Name

Suggestions from Greenville:

1. Shelf specifications (a little late, I'll admit):

Standard inside measurement: 9" deep; 10" high; supports every 3 feet.

(Standard lumber cut is 8" or 10" widths; either will do, depending on your book collection. If given 12" width, get it cut to 8" width and put together the 4" strips to make more 8" shelves. Twelve inch width is so wide the books will fall back into the space between books and wall, a real problem.)

Have some short shelves 12, or 14, or even 16" high for tall books; they're more accessible if standing than if laid flat on top of each other.

(After calling Berkeley, Calif. to get shelf size, our shelves were built 12 x 12, so we're always digging books out of the back gap, or peering under the eaves to see the row.)

2. Use for heavy, worthless books:

a. Use instead of bricks for shelf bases and supports.

(Don't stack more than 3 or 4 shelves on either brick or book base--too likely to topple.)

b. Use for bookends or book stops on shelves.

(There should be empty spaces on your shelves, to make your collection more appealing, also allows for easier removal of books & allows for additions.)

c. Crafts. (See below.) or throw them away.

3. Library craft projects:

a. --cover & decorate bricks or books for bookstops

b. --paste heavy Kraft paper on inside of colorful book jackets to preserve them

c. --make book jackets out of wall paper for old, worn books you want to keep

d. --worthless books can be used for children to color designs on the printed page, color in illustrations, or paste pictures in.

e. --joke books, or book boxes: cut out inside square in center of the book so it can't be told from outside. Use as a jewelry box, to keep keys in, cigarette box, give a present in, etc.

4. Excess books, as novels of no particular quality, or many duplicates: sell at a bazaar, or give away.

5. Set up a Reference Shelf or section with encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, etc. & one or two good books of every subject available (label sections). For use in the library.

Negro Life is our most popular shelf. That term covers by and about Negroes. The succeeding sections are marked Liberty (Civil Rights) Pursuit of Justice Race and Prejudice.

Suggestions from Greenville (contd.)

6. Bulletin Boards

--Sheet of heavy cardboard, as from a mattress box. Grocery & drug stores sometimes have display boxes of a solid colored cardboard that make attractive bulletin boards; otherwise paint, or put a colored paper trim or cover on the brown cardboard, if you wish. Use colorful headings or markers to liven up.

7. A dignified grocery box with the flaps cut off (e.g., a lemon box) makes a good magazine or pamphlet file. Use squares of cardboard (as shirt cardboard) for dividers with labels printed on top edge. Set it where it is open, easily looked down into, and easily accessible.

8. Check the magazines in your shipments. Many are sent because of specific articles. It's worth the time to look through the table of contents, or get your knowledgeable young people to look at the T of C and then take a quick flip through the magazine itself.

Star the page in the upper corner with bright red; star the table of contents, mark the page number in bright color in upper right corner of the magazine cover (or tape a label there) so the user can go directly to the page from the cover. Might even turn down corner of the page or put a tab on it, so the magazine will fall open to the right place.

We just received three New Republics with important articles, one about Oxford orientation by Robert Coles, the psychiatrist who was there. Did one of our group write for it?

9. My own philosophy is that use of the books is more important than keeping check on them. What's yours?

Suggestions from Shaw

Judy York at Shaw is starting a Library Club whose members will give book reports at mass meeting.

A book talk on a Negro Life book; or a brief lecture on some aspect of Negro history, well spoken and brief, would be good at a mass meeting.

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The Greenville Freedom Library stamp reads:

FREEDOM LIBRARY
Read for Fun
Read to Learn
Read for Freedom