

The Librarian

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ANNOUNCER JOHN REED KING: Americans at Work! The program about you and what you do for a living! What's your job?

MAN: I'm a bank clerk.

SECOND MAN: I'm a wheat farmer.

GIRL: I'm a cashier in a restaurant.

SECOND GIRL: I'm a model.

MAN: I'm a tailor.

ANNOUNCER KING: Each week at this time the Columbia Broadcasting System brings you the human story behind the job -- a glimpse into the lives and work of the people who keep our everyday world in order: Americans at Work! Tonight, Columbia presents -- but wait a minute. Perhaps a better introduction would be a little scene that took place last week in one of New York's overcrowded sections.

(Traffic and street sounds in and fade.)

MIKE: (Tough) Hey, Johnny, what you doing with them books, trying to get in good with the teacher?

(Other boys up. Cries of "Teacher's pet," "Sissy," "Bet he's got an apple, too," etc.)

JOHNNIE: (Bluntly) They aren't schoolbooks.

MIKE: What are they then? (Taunting) Let's see 'em, then. Where'd you get 'em?

JOHNNIE: I got them from the library.

MIKE: The library! Yeah, you did.

JOHNNIE: Yes, I did -- and I got a card to prove it. Look at that: my name on it.

MIKE: Well, I'll be -- ! Look at that, fellers. "John Sweeny." Printed, too. Some punkins!

JOHNNIE: Yeah, and all I gotta do is give this card in and Miss Martin lets me take all the books I want. She helps me pick 'em -- about icebergs and submarines and ...

BOY: (OFF) Say, Mike, are we going down to Kelley's or are we gonna listen to that baby yap?

MIKE: (Slightly off) Aw keep your shirt on. (In) Say, Johnnie, (very casual) how didja happen to get one of them cards?

JOHNNIE: Miss Martin'll tell you; she's swell ... (Fading).

ANNOUNCER KING: Miss Martin will tell you -- Miss Martin, that trim, busy kindly woman who sits at work in a city branch library and opens a magic world of books to the stream of human beings young and old who flow past her desk. Miss Martin is one of America's 40,000 librarians who, like the teacher, the doctor, the social worker, find their work entangled every day in the lives and problems of the people they serve. Tonight we're going to tell you about Miss Martin. Is her job dull?

HELEN: Library work? I should say not. I love it. It's exciting and always different -- never monotonous. It's just as different as every individual reader is, and no two people are alike.

ANNOUNCER KING: Well, we'd like to know something about you.

HELEN: What would you like to know? I'm thirty-two. I've been here at this library branch for six years now. I share an apartment with another girl -- she's a trained nurse -- and our hours are so different we rarely see each other ...

WOMAN: (Fading in) Helen, can you take the lending desk for the next half hour? Miss Grey has a cold and has gone home ...

HELEN: Why, yes, surely; right away. Excuse me, won't you? Saturday night always means a busy lending desk ...

ANNOUNCER KING: So Miss Martin tackles another of the many duties that fall to a librarian. How did she get her job? Well, let's go back eighteen years ago. A fourteen-year-old girl sits in a living room in a pleasant house (fading) in a small American town ...

MOTHER: Helen, it's ridiculous to think of your wanting to become a librarian. Why, that's just work for older ladies who need to help out a little bit.

HELEN: That's the whole trouble. That's what you think it is, and you don't know anything about it. I love books and I'd like to help other people love them.

FATHER: That's what you get, Grace, for letting the child keep her nose in books all the time. Girls shouldn't be bothered with book learning.

HELEN: Oh, Dad -- how can you say such old-fashioned things? I do want to be a librarian, really I do. What do you say, Uncle Ned?

MOTHER: Yes, Ned, maybe you can talk some sense into this girl's head ... bury herself away in a library.

NED: (Kindly, gently) I say if the girl wants to be a librarian, let her. You know, times have changed, Grace. Just because your spinster sister Jane sat in the Ellenville General Store forty-three years dealing out a passel of books she'd never read, to all the neighbors, and runnin' the town to boot, doesn't mean that's what Helen's going to do. From what I can see, a librarian's got to be a right modern smart girl now.

HELEN: (Impulsively) Oh, she has, Uncle Ned: high school, college, then a year at library school.

FATHER: What! All that to learn how to stamp dates in the back of books?

HELEN: (Scornfully) Stamp dates! Have you any idea what she does? She's got to learn cataloguing -- and literature and history -- and psychology -- and -- everything! She helps people with what to read and see that they get the best.

She --

MOTHER: Helen, dear, I had no idea you felt so strongly about it.

HELEN: Well I do. I went over last week to talk to the county librarian at Westbrook. And you know what she said? She said, "If you want to be a librarian, don't come in here and tell me you like books. Come in here and tell me you like people, and I know you'll be a good one."

ANNOUNCER KING: Young Helen Martin liked books and people. And six years later, after high school and a state university, she got her first job -- replacing a librarian who was to retire. What was it like, this first step in the librarian's career? Well, it was a small local library in a town of 5,000 -- perhaps you remember one in your home town -- the rural library, small and isolated, that accounted for nearly half the books loaned and read in America.

Helen's salary was \$60 a month, and her new problems were many.

MISS ELLIS: Now, my dear, I've been here thirty-one years, and I think I can help you in getting settled before I leave. By the way, where are you living?

HELEN: I have a room down at the parsonage; seven dollars a week with meals.

MISS ELLIS: That's nice, you'll find it very pleasant. And of course for your month's vacation you can go home?

HELEN: Mercy, I haven't thought of a vacation yet. I'm too anxious to get started. Are there lots of books?

MISS ELLIS: No, the list isn't very good, and you'll find difficulty in buying

for it -- what they want to read and what you think they ought to read --but of course every one of us has that problem. You'll just have to know your people. Now, for instance, there's the Kelleran family. They're mill workers, all of them, and they come regularly to the library. Sometimes they walk -- and it's six miles ...

HELEN: What's that card with the red mark?

MISS ELLIS: That's Mrs. Granville, the wife of one of our trustees. She's always looking for material for papers she reads at her club. You'll end by writing the papers, too. I always had to -- you know, Ming dynasty -- Indian music --

HELEN: Goodness! (Chuckles) Well, I can try.

MISS ELLIS: Now here are the Bryants -- nice family. Oh, you'll know everybody in town shortly. They'll ask you for Sunday waffles, and they're awfully nice.

But be careful when you send them a card when little Jimmie has a book long overdue. Try to avoid it. She gets perfectly wild.

HELEN: How do you get the book back?

MISS ELLIS: Oh, you'll run into Jimmie around -- coming from school or in the drugstore -- and you just keep asking him. And now here's the Heckett family -- he's a truck farmer -- lives about ten miles out of town. They're very poor but they're rich in what they get from books.

HELEN: Goodness, you really know your people, don't you?

MISS ELLIS: Everybody; it's the only way to be a successful country librarian.

ANNOUNCER KING: The local librarian holds a key job in her small community. Her particular problem is knowing her people intimately -- supplying an infinite variety of demands from a small supply of books -- and suiting her personal life to a budget that will rarely grow beyond \$1,200 a year.

What about the city librarian? Well, let's ask Helen Martin -- her story is typical of many.

HELEN: I was a rural librarian for six years. It was a wonderful experience in

knowing people, but I knew I couldn't get any farther there. In those six years I had managed to save enough to take me to library school for a year. A year later I started to look for a city job.

ANNOUNCER KING: A city job! ... joining the thousands of busy men and women who cater daily to the book needs of millions. Although we are telling you the

story of a girl librarian tonight, the library field has at least one man out of seven librarians -- in technical departments, in advisory work, in administrative work in every branch. For it is the trained man librarian who fills the executive positions at our biggest libraries.

How important are these libraries? In many American cities, actually more people subscribe to the public library than to the telephone service. But now back to Helen Martin. What does the girl in the city library do? Well, she might do cataloguing to begin with. She might sit at the reference desk and help subscribers look up material. She might even start in the repair room -- mending and sorting old books. Wherever she started, today she would be required to be a trained librarian -- that is, one year at a library school after her college course. But when Helen Martin came to the city ...

HELEN: I was lucky; it wasn't necessary in those days to have a library training, so having it gave me a good start. I got a job for \$100 a month in the information room of a city library, and there I really learned what a library really meant -- and incidentally what hard work meant too.

(Fade in murmur of talk, as at busy desk.)

WOMAN: Miss Martin, you're new but you look capable. We're putting you on three nights a week. You will, of course, have those mornings free, but you will remain on duty until ten -- Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. (Fading) Here's your schedule.

GIRL: Oh, Miss Martin, that's tough for a beginner -- Saturday night, when you

might want to do things.

HELEN: Oh, I don't mind that. I don't know anybody in the city and I'd just as leave be at work. Saturday night's the busiest, isn't it?

GIRL: In winter, yes. Saturday afternoon is the worst, though. Where are you living?

HELEN: I found a furnished room over on Forty-seventh Street; it looks all right and it's cheap -- \$7 a week.

SECOND GIRL: That's about right. I know a pretty good restaurant over there; you can get breakfasts for 25 cents, dinner for 55 cents. You find salaries go very far in this city.

FIRST GIRL: And I know a marvelous shop where you can buy clothes cheap when you need them: dresses \$10 and hats \$4.

HELEN: I'll be glad to know about it. But right this minute the only thing I want is a pair of shoes -- low-heeled comfortable ones. It seems to me I walk miles in that building every day.

FIRST GIRL: You do. You can get a pair like mine -- look at 'em; comfortable as they come -- for \$6.

THIRD GIRL: (Fading in) Say, girls, there's a lecture in the Social Division on New India tonight. Want to come? (Voices up.) Come on, Miss Martin; you come with us.

ANNOUNCER KING: One of the librarian's chief tasks is to keep up with events. She must read; she must know what's going on -- travel if she can.

HELEN: It wasn't easy on \$100 a month, but somehow we have to do it -- at least read and go to lectures. We must keep ahead of our readers to be able to help them. Because that's what a librarian's job is. It isn't books -- books are simply your instrument. It's people; it's human lives, to be helped and inspired and perhaps untangled.

ANNOUNCER KING: Was the work at the city library hard?

HELEN: It wasn't easy. It meant always being cheerful and smiling no matter how you felt. It meant working continually under pressure. Never a moment to stop and relax. As soon as you finished with one person there was another right there. Sometimes as many as a hundred a day would come to my corner of the information desk. It meant ... (Ring of phone.) Hello ... Oh, yes, the health department? ... Yes ... You want a list of books on air washing ... Yes. I'll refer you to Mr. Anderson in the engineering section; he'll help you ... All right ... Certainly ... Thank you. (Click of phone.)

MAN: Excuse me, Miss ...

HELEN: (Pleasantly) Just a minute -- until I make a note. There! Yes, what can I do for you?

MAN: Do you have any books on King Tut?

HELEN: King Tut? Why, I think we have a good many; we have quite a section on ancient Egypt.

MAN: Well, I read a little piece about him the other day and I thought I'd like to read more.

HELEN: Well, I think I can give you quite a list. I'm not sure they are in the circulation library, but I know you can read them in the reference section.

MAN: That's all right, miss, I got plenty of time to read. I worked in a shoe factory but they laid me off, and I gotta find something to take my mind off of things. This little piece about King Tut sort of got me and ... I'd like to read some more.

HELEN: That factory worker during his unemployment got to be almost an authority on Egypt. From simple little books he branched out, and the last time I saw him he was going to write an article for his community paper and was talking to the museum about a job. There were others ...

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN: Excuse me, miss. I want some books on chicken raising. Can you suggest a good one?

HELEN: We have several; this catalogue will give you some and I'll be glad to make out a list.

WOMAN: I'd appreciate that. You see, my husband has worked hard in the city all his life, and now we want to go into the country. We've bought a little place and we think we can make a go of it if we raise chickens.

HELEN: You wanted to take a couple of hours to help these people and dig into their subject for them, but you could only skim the surface. The demands were too heavy.

(Phone rings.) A wiring diagram for a photoelectric cell? Call Mr. Greene in the electric division.

(Phone rings.) Information on grading milk in California? I'll see what we have.

(Phone rings.) You're giving a debate on bus lines versus street cars? Yes, I think we can get you a list of books.

MAN: Say, miss, can you help me? I'm looking for some books on public speaking.

HELEN: Textbooks or general reading?

MAN: Well, I don't know. Anything that will help me. My boss sent me here. He wants me to make a speech at the mill next winter to the union, and -- well --

HELEN: Have you ever done any public speaking?

MAN: Naw, I can't seem to say anything in them meetings unless I get mad. I thought maybe if you could help me with some books ...

HELEN: We could help him -- we could always help them -- time was our only handicap.

ANNOUNCER KING: The libraries were first to realize this, and, in the last ten

years, out of these demands has grown one of the most interesting branches of library work in the whole field -- work that ranks with social work in its far-reaching effects. That is the work of the reader's advisory staff.

HELEN: That means that instead of floods of questions coming to the general information desk, an office was set aside where a librarian could meet people, study them, talk to them quietly -- and out of that conference recommend a list of books best suited to their needs. It's thrilling work, and it takes all the tact and sympathy and learning you could ever get.

ANNOUNCER KING: Did you join the advisory staff?

HELEN: No. I was at the information desk three years. Then one day they sent me to the children's room ...

ANNOUNCER KING: The children's room! Thanks to far-sighted teachers and librarians of fifty years ago, almost every library today boasts a children's room or a children's corner. And children make up a third or more of America's total library users.

HELEN: I'll never forget my first introduction to the children's room. I walked into a room filled with small chairs and tables -- and dozens (fading) of youngsters.

WOMAN: (Story telling) And so King Arthur's sword waved three times in the air and then sank slowly into the water to disappear forever.

(Children's voice. Ad libs.)

FIRST CHILD: Miss Brown, where can I get that story? Does the book have pictures?

SECOND CHILD: My brother's home sick, Miss Brown. Could I take the King Arthur story home to him? (Voices; fade)

MISS BROWN: There are copies on the shelves. Those of you who can't get it this week, give your name to Miss Phillips; she'll have it for you later. (Voices fade.)

HELEN: Miss Brown, I'm Helen Martin ...

MISS BROWN: Oh, yes, Miss Martin, you're the new girl for the children's room. You got here just at story-telling hour. The place isn't usually so hectic.

HELEN: Do you always have a group as large as this?

MISS BROWN: We try to limit it to fifty. But it's very popular. Children from all walks of life -- poor children, children of professional people, they all love it. You'll like this part of library work ...

MAN: (Fading in) I beg your pardon. Are you the story-telling librarian in charge here?

MISS BROWN: Yes, I am.

MAN: Well, my son Jimmie came home with his library card last week, and we won't have any peace until, sister, here, gets one, too. She's only six. How young do you allow them to be?

MISS BROWN: Just old enough to sign the card and understand the pledge. Can you sign your name, dear?

MAN: 'Fraid she's lost her tongue. But I know she wants a card.

MISS BROWN: Well, come over to the desk and we'll get her one. We have plenty of picture books for her. She'll get a lot out of it ... (fading.)

HELEN: Getting their library card is a big event for these children, and when I took the children's room, I always found it a fascinating performance. One youngster would bring another. It's their first act of citizenship and they never failed to be impressed with the solemnity of it. I was in the children's section for four years, and I saw all kinds of things ...

LITTLE GIRL: (Timidly) Miss Martin, could I have _Black Sambo_?

HELEN: Yes, Sally, right here. Sally, I've missed you. Where have you been all these weeks? (Pause) Don't you want to tell?

LITTLE GIRL: (Catch in voice) Home.

HELEN: (Very kindly) Home? And no time to come for books?

LITTLE GIRL: N-no. (Sob in voice) It -- it wasn't that.

HELEN: Well, don't talk about it, Sally, if you don't want to. Here's _Black Sambo_.

BOY: (Slightly older) I know why she didn't come, Miss Martin -- her brother too. They didn't have any shoes; that's why. They didn't come to school, either.

HELEN: _Sally_, dear ...

LITTLE GIRL: (Proudly) It -- it wasn't that at all. (Near breaking) Let me have _Black Sambo_; I'm going home.

HELEN: There were all kinds of problems to be faced -- and we did what we could to help those children on their way -- making up for their poor surroundings and cramped quarters by opening the wide world of books to them. I was there for nearly four years. By that time I had been in library work about twelve years. I was transferred to another branch of the city library -- as assistant to the head -- and my salary was \$2,000.

ANNOUNCER KING: Now we want to know what problems a librarian has -- what are the headaches in her job.

HELEN: Well, it depends where she is. At the desk of a public library -- well, stay around here -- and you'll see ...

BOY: Gee, Miss Martin, I'm sorry I kept this book out so long.

HELEN: Well, it's bad, Joey; your overdue bill is 26 cents.

BOY: 26 cents! Gee, Miss Martin, I haven't got 26 cents!

HELEN: (Very kindly) I'm sorry, really I am -- but it's a library rule. You can't take another book until your overdue bill is taken care of.

BOY: But ...

HELEN: You don't have to pay it all at once, Joey.

BOY: Oh. (Thinking hard) Oh. Well, I -- I have ten cents with me.

HELEN: Why, that's fine; that's almost half of it. You'll have the rest paid off in no time.

BOY: Oh I -- I can't leave all of it. Could I have nine cents back, please? And please -- I'd like another book.

ANNOUNCER KING: And because librarians must be something of psychologists as well as book advisers, Joey will get his next book, though it will take him many weeks to pay that fine. We've tried to give you glimpses of the work of America's 40,000 librarians -- who dispense four free books a year for every man, woman and child in the country, at a per capita expense of 37 cents a year. Were each person to purchase those books, he would spend nearly \$10. How

did the library system start? Well, libraries are as old as books themselves -- but in this country interest in it was promoted by a group of eager young men in Philadelphia over two hundred years ago. In 1731 Benjamin Franklin established a free lending library, and soon other book collections followed. In 1754 the New York City library had 650 books in its collection -- smaller than the smallest rural library today. A century later it had grown to 31,000.

But still free books were available to only a fraction of the public. In 1850 a small, ragged, thirteen-year-old boy in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, found time heavy on his hands, and Colonel James Anderson, a citizen of the town, noticed the little fellow playing in Barefoot Square.

ANDERSON: What are you doing there, young feller?

BOY: Just whittling; finished my chores sweeping. There ain't any more jobs to get until tomorrow -- so -- I'm whittling.

ANDERSON: Seems to me you could do something better with your time. Ever look at a story book?

BOY: Books? No, I never see any books, mister. We don't have books at my house.

ANDERSON: Well, now, I tell you something -- a boy like you ought to have books to read. Now you come home with me and I'll show you some books and you can take any of them home to read you want to.

BOY: Take 'em home? Oh mister -- that's grand of you.

ANDERSON: I know they call you Andy around the Square. What's your full name?

BOY: Carnegie, sir -- Andrew Carnegie.

ANNOUNCER KING: Andrew Carnegie never ceased to be grateful for that first

opportunity to read good books. And years later when he became a multimillionaire he translated that gratitude into \$65,000,000 worth of libraries in communities all over the country -- over 3,000 libraries bringing books to sections that had never known them. But what of the early librarians?

In Ben Franklin's day, the paid librarian worked two afternoons a week for a salary of \$60 a year. But times were changing. Those who had pioneered and settled found time to read. Books were more in demand, and trained persons to take care of them. After the Civil War, the work began to take on the dignity and scholarship of a profession -- a profession that was to influence every kind of activity ...

WOMAN: I'm a college librarian.

SECOND WOMAN: I'm a librarian in a reference room in a bank.

THIRD WOMAN: My job is to take library books to hospitals.

FOURTH WOMAN: I drive a country book wagon.

FIFTH WOMAN: I'm a librarian in an insurance company.

SIXTH WOMAN: I'm a librarian on a newspaper.

ANNOUNCER KING: And dozens of others, trained as Helen Martin is trained. Today the librarian is in demand everywhere, and today some 35,000 women and 5,000 men answer that demand. We are going to take you to an actual library in

Los Angeles for a direct interview with two women who are successful librarians today and introduce you first hand to Americans at Work, at the job of supplying you with the wealth of library books. We take you now to Los Angeles.

ANNOUNCER THOMAS FREEBAIRN-SMITH: (from Los Angeles) Well, it seems that libraries are not so different here on the Pacific Coast from all you've been telling us there in the East. To most of us average citizens, the kindly smile, and the well-informed answers that greet us when we go to our public library are factors in library service that we too have come to accept without

question and -- I think it's a tribute -- without wonder. We're apt to forget that the lady in the music reference room is a human being who has personal and private thoughts that are not entirely wrapped around Beethoven symphonies

and the obscure theme that you have had buzzing through your head for weeks.

However, we're now on the main floor of the Los Angeles Public Library. We're in an office just off the rotunda and not very far from the information desk. There's a quiet hum of activity which makes an appropriate background to this interview. It's really part of the library atmosphere. However, before me are two gracious ladies who should be able to answer the sort of questions I want to ask them. One is Miss Nell Steinmetz, who is the librarian here. She has had many years of children's library work. The other is Mrs. Faith Holmes Hyers, who is library publicist. Mrs. Hyers, as a first and very leading question, I think: What special vocational training is demanded before a librarian qualifies?

HYERS: Well, you see, we can't any longer be just genteel ladies when we sit at a library desk. Now we are rather expected to have about the same training that a teacher has; perhaps college, and perhaps a year in a library school to

be a librarian.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: And the specialized training that you get in the library school has to do, of course --

HYERS: The library school tries to do a tremendous piece of work and to train you for all sorts of fields of literature and learning for one year.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: Miss Steinmetz, a good leading question for you, I think, is, Are the hours exacting? We heard from the fictitious Miss Martin in New York that they are trying at times.

STEINMETZ: Not so much. As you know, we do work an eight-hour day, but it's a broken schedule so that you have certain mornings free. I think any woman will appreciate what a free morning means instead of working from eight until five every day. If you do work until nine o'clock that's not too late to go out and be frivolous afterwards if you want to.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: Tell me, are we who seek books and ask questions of you -- are we very trying? Do we try your patience a lot? What would you say to that, Mrs. Hyers?

HYERS: Not trying, I should say, but very entertaining at times. Sometimes we have a little difficulty in discovering just what it is that you're asking for. I remember once in our science room that someone came in and asked if we had any books on electrical engineering. Of course the librarian proceeded to find a whole shelf of books on electrical engineering, and then asked, "Now just what phase do you wish?" "Well," she said, "I think something in household appliances. She later got it down to an electrical refrigerator, and finally, when the story came out, what the woman really wanted was a recipe for an icebox cake.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: So she started off with electrical engineering! Tell me, you've had so many years with children, Miss Steinmetz, are children pretty careful of their books?

STEINMETZ: Yes, as a rule I think they are. You have children in poorer homes who have some difficulty with keeping their books in good condition. We had a very engaging little girl come in one day who was heartbroken because a page from her book was missing. We knew that the family was poor, and we didn't want to charge her a penalty on it, so we asked her if she couldn't bring the page in. She said no, she was awfully sorry but she couldn't. It was a picture book that she took home for her little brother to read, and the little brother had liked it so well that he had taken it to bed with him. We said, "Well, even if the page is a little crushed we can perhaps straighten it out." She said, "No, you see, the baby ate it."

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: That really leads up to grown-ups on the same question. I imagine that people who come in and ask for books would be averagely careful with them. Is that true?

HYERS: I think we could say that the great majority of people handle books pretty carefully, but once in a while we have someone who is very fond of

giving his opinions or comments in a book. He writes these charming little essays on the sides of the page, and the future readers are somewhat bored or astonished at finding them. Recently we discovered a man who has been indulging in this whimsy and we asked him if he could pay the fine for these books. He couldn't do that, so we put him to work erasing his comments. It took him about six days of eight-hour work to erase these marginal notes.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: Good gracious! Is that an unusual thing, or do you find that people quite generally make marginal notes?

HYERS: It happens all too often, but we wish they might remember to do it on personal books.

STEINMETZ: It's awfully nice when they do it in pencil so that we can erase. Some of them do use ink.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: Oh, my! Probably during school time, too, I imagine, on scientific or other books that involve research.

HYERS: Sometimes, yes, that would happen.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: What do they do about fixing up books -- the dogears and the broken boards and missing pages and cutout pictures?

HYERS: Of course all libraries have to have big mending departments. We have one that we call the Mendery and the Bindery, and perhaps one-seventh of our books in the entire collection have been to this bindery every year. And sometimes the dog chews a book and then the patrons probably pay for it.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: This being an ad lib interview, I've been racking my brains for the sort of questions that would present the most interesting highlights. The thought occurred to me. Are there many seasonal changes in the amount of use that people make of the libraries?

STEINMETZ: Yes, I think very definitely so. You have a rush for garden books in the spring of the year, and travel books always go very well during summer vacation period. March and October seem to be the peak months of library usage. October perhaps because people come back from vacations with renewed energy and want to turn their thoughts to something new, but March, I don't know why, unless you're coming out of hibernation from the winter.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: Yes, that seems odd. March is really a sort of nondescript month, beyond its having been an inaugural month once every four years, and a rainy month. However, I'd really like to talk more about you librarians yourselves than about us who use the libraries. Do you people have to read a lot of books yourselves to keep informed on the sort of questions that people ask, or do you have lists of -- shall we say -- reviews sent to you, or do you take it on hearsay?

STEINMETZ: I think the odd thing about it is that we all love to read books and we read all we can possibly find time for. Then we depend on the expert reviewers who balance their judgments and keep track of what is coming in. In this library we have what we call specialists -- persons who know more and more about less and less. We have such a person in the science room. She knows more about her subject! She reads all the things that come in, magazines and periodicals. She reports these findings to the other librarians so that we know how to order. That all helps.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: You say that the lady in the science department is apt to

read scientific books? That would seem to indicate that people who have special qualifications are placed in special departments. Is that true?

HYERS: That's what I think all libraries try to do. They say that no matter what you know, there is a place for it in library work.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: Out of that, too, grows another question. Does the particular work in the library tend to develop certain hobbies among librarians -- personal hobbies that have nothing to do with their hours at the library?

STEINMETZ: Yes, I daresay that's true. The entire order department here, for instance, has gone in for stamp collecting because the books they receive, of course, come from all over the world. There's probably a great battle going on as to who is going to get first pop at the stamps as they come in.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: And can you think of any other odd hobbies that have grown out of the work?

HYERS: Yes. In our art department I know there's a young lady who is most interested in Japanese books. She began growing flowers and now she's quite an arranger of flowers. In fact, she has become quite well known for it.

FREEBAIRN-SMITH: I think that's extremely interesting and I do want to thank you both for submitting to this sort of at-the-last-moment questioning.

You have been listening to *Americans at Work*, the program about you and what you do for a living, presented each week at this time by Columbia's Department of Education. Tonight's program was directed by Brewster Morgan and the script written by Margaret Lewerth. The interviews with the librarians were conducted by Thomas Freebairn-Smith of Station KNX. The Workers' Education Bureau of America collaborates on research for the entire series.

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Originally broadcast: 1 July 1939

[AMERICANS AT WORK is about the American people and what they do for a living.

It is a series of "documentary" broadcasts, started on April 28th, 1938, in cooperation with the new CBS Adult Education Board, the chairman of which is Professor Lyman Bryson of Columbia University.]

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