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*Women Leaders Of Our Community*

**Rocky Mount's First Librarian Gives Twenty-Two Years Service**



**MRS NELL G. BATTLE**

Often recognition for unselfish public service comes late in life, but is never unappreciated by the people "in the know," and today we are extending recognition to one of Rocky Mount's native daughters, whose service to the community we are all privileged to enjoy, as will our children and our children's children.

Mrs. Nell G. Battle, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Gupton, was born October 25, 1875, and was married on November 6, 1896 to Judge Jacob Battle. She is the mother of three children, two of whom are residents of the city, Mrs. Frank S. Wilkinson and Mrs. E. L. Eaton. An only son, who served in the armed forces during the last war, died as a result of malaria contracted in the Pacific theatre.

Among her most outstanding services to the community was the organization of the city's first public library, which took the name of Thomas Hackney Braswell Memorial Library, and was founded in April, 1922. She was Rocky Mount's first and only librarian for twenty two years, and during 1940 she, accompanied by Mrs. Effie Vines Gordon, K. T. McIntyre of Red Oak and Miss Marjorie Beal, secretary of the North Carolina Library Commission, drove all through Nash County and selected thirty stations for bookmobile service.

She had the first bookmobile built, which was taken over by the government for use as an ambulance during the second world war. However, this work was kept up, and these 30 stations serviced by responsible volunteer workers from each station who came after and returned the books to the local library. This schedule was used until recently when another bookmobile was purchased and a librarian hired, and the work now is done on a regular schedule.

During the second World War, Mrs. Battle was appointed by the late Millard Jones to keep a record of all servicemen and women from Rocky Mount for the State Historical Association.

She was organist and choir director of the Church of The Good Shepherd for twelve years; president of the Episcopal Women's Auxiliary for three years, and served this same organization as secretary and treasurer for an additional two years. She has served many times as a teacher in the Episcopal Sunday School, and has served in an active and advisory capacity to civic committees too numerous to mention.

She is a charter member of the Research Club, which was the first literary club organized in Rocky Mount, and from this beginning, the many literary clubs in the city regularly go to the public library for help on program planning.

In October, 1943, after a severe heart attack, it was necessary for Mrs. Battle to resign her work as librarian, which she did in January, 1944, and the work was taken over by Mrs. Ruth Jeffress, who had served with Mrs. Battle as assistant librarian for 15 years.

Mrs. Battle, who will celebrate her 76th birthday on the twenty fifth of this month, makes her home now with her daughter, Mrs. Frank Wilkinson, in West Haven, and even though now her health will not permit her taking an active part in civic undertakings in the city, her family will tell you that her interest in things that are started for the betterment of Rocky Mount still are of as much interest to her, as they were when she was helping to promote them.

After Judge Battle's death Mrs. Battle, who was then the city's full time librarian, ran "Cool Springs" plantation, and looked after her family, any one of which would have been a full time undertaking for a less active person, and as Mrs. Wilkinson says, "I just don't see how she did it,"