

[1979]

B: I'm draft, please. L.

Betty Keet's  
father was  
Arthur West

His brother was  
Fritz - the Gardener

unless he had a  
nickname of  
Eddie

memoria of ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> 75th anniversary  
along Barnum street

one of my earliest memories is of  
going from my house <sup>on Barnum</sup> to visit the "new"  
house, where I was born <sup>in 1903,</sup> lay exactly one block  
on a southwest corner, with but four other  
houses <sup>including my</sup> <sup>comprose</sup> <sup>corner</sup> <sup>new</sup> <sup>building</sup>  
between home and that <sup>down in front</sup> <sup>waiting</sup>  
and all those exciting books <sup>inside</sup>.

[1979]

# B: In draft, please. L.

All caps → Memories of ~~opening~~ Carnegie public library.  
(ON ITS 75th anniversary)  
along Barnum street

One of my earliest memories is of almost daily <sup>trudging</sup> <sup>from my house</sup> <sup>on Barnum</sup> to visit the "new" Carnegie public <sup>library</sup> a block away. While I probably couldn't have explained it then, my house, where I was born <sup>in 1903</sup>, lay exactly one block west of the <sup>new</sup> library, also on a southwest corner, with but four other houses <sup>intervening</sup> <sup>between</sup> <sup>my</sup> home and that <sup>comprehensive</sup> <sup>corner</sup> new building, with all those tall <sup>red</sup> <sup>pillars</sup> in front and all those spitting <sup>books</sup> <sup>waiting</sup> inside.

In those days the children's section was still on the main floor to the right of the entrance, and there I'd crouch for hours poring over novel treasures on the illustrated "Crown" books on the long, narrow shelf. Nicholas Marnham, as filled with absorbing tales and stories and fables, Arabian Nights, Beowulf, many others, <sup>and</sup> <sup>magazines</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>both</sup> when, with their help, I learned to read. I moved on to the "thrilling" fairy tales of Hans Andersen and the Brothers Grimm, the latter well named, as I fond look on it, many of their yarns making the <sup>TV</sup> <sup>violence</sup> <sup>look</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>late</sup> <sup>70s</sup> <sup>some</sup> <sup>I</sup> <sup>can</sup> <sup>even</sup> <sup>recall</sup> <sup>some</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>dialogue</sup>

where I was born,

one of my favorites

of  
One of my earliest memories  
is of sitting on the floor in front of  
one of the bookshelves in the corner  
of Paris and Barreman streets, to the  
east of the main entrance of the  
Public Library on the southeast  
corner of Madison and Barreman Streets.

In those days the children's section was still on the main floor, to the right of the entrance, and there I'd crouch for hours poring over such treasures as the illustrated "Brownie" books or the long-ranish St. Nicholas magazine, so filled with absorbing tales and rhymes and hand-drawn pictures, besides <sup>so</sup> many others <sup>children's books and magazines</sup> I can't recall.

2

When, with their <sup>great</sup> help, I learned to read, I moved on to the <sup>thrilling</sup> fairy tales of Hans Andersen and the Brothers Grimm, the latter well named, as I look back on it, many of their yarns making <sup>feelings</sup> the ~~TV~~ <sup>TV</sup> violence look mighty tame. I can even recall some of the dialogue

my which <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>little boy</sup> ~~someone~~ called Mowgli, <sup>and his</sup> ~~and his~~ <sup>name</sup> ~~name~~

one of my favorites

from "Little Red Ridinghood, or at least I think I can: "What nice long white teeth you have, Grandmother," said Little Red Ridinghood, my dear" "Oh, my dear, the better to eat you with," hissed the wicked wolf disguised as the child's grandmother, suddenly <sup>leaping in</sup> ~~leaping in~~ near with gaping jaws.

that I turned

After that it was almost a relief to turn to the Horatio Alger books, an ~~almost~~ endless series of ~~books~~ devoted to the proposition that <sup>the one</sup> the sure road to success for <sup>at boy</sup> invariably began ~~only~~ by shining shoes or peddling newspapers, rather discouraging news to a <sup>local</sup> lad who had only <sup>four</sup> ~~five~~ stores to take care of and a mere prosaic milk route.

at boy

3

Next came the Tom Swift books, an early series <sup>about the hero's exploits</sup> of Tom's adventures with the latest new gadgets a sort of preview to <sup>modern</sup> science-fiction, <sup>not</sup> to mention the doings of the three Rover boys, whose names I can't ever forget (though I fail to remember <sup>those of the names of</sup> some of ~~these~~ in my own books),

all exciting ~~and~~ PLUCKY

in which <sup>to wear</sup> there was <sup>a little boy</sup> someone called Mowgli,  
and hopeless

Tom, Dick and "fun loving" Sam. Then came  
followed the exciting Tarzan tales (can  
I really <sup>still</sup> recall that the lion was called  
Simba?) swiftly followed by Kipling's  
Jungle Book, by which time I was  
such a confirmed literary soak -- over  
reading, reading, reading -- that the story  
gets a little hazy.

begins to

But I shall never forget the  
librarian who ruled the roost ~~later~~ during  
this <sup>earlier</sup> era, Nellie Brayton, sister  
widowed sister of the wife of Doctor George  
G. Barnett, who helped usher me into  
the world, though my memory of this event  
is a trifle hazy, himself the father of  
my boyhood friend and school mate,  
Kenneth Barnett, who played <sup>the part of</sup> my father  
in our senior class play...

is

ONE  
WORD

But I'm neglecting Nellie Brayton, →

Nellie of the small rimless pince nez eyeglasses forever clasped &  
 Nellie of the jet black hair, invariably <sup>which she wore</sup> so  
 severely curled and imprisoned by <sup>so many gleaming</sup> countless metal  
 clasps clasps and <sup>assorted</sup> hairpins that all one saw my  
 main recollection is of <sup>one occasional</sup> protruding tufts and wide  
 of hair as viewed through a wire cage (though I don't  
 think she <sup>ever</sup> wore a hair net, so <sup>popular</sup> common at the time), Nellie  
 of the imperious mien who could by a single frowning  
 stare impose absolute silence on whole <sup>regiments</sup> ~~armies~~ of  
 whispering juveniles. I regret to say that I never got  
 to know her very well as I suspect that beneath her  
 queenly exterior dwelt an interesting, humorous and  
 independent spirit; in any case I'll never forget her.

tightly

naughty

her happy borrowed aquiline nose,

lacks Mellie's hypnotic stare and usually terrified secured by countless Japs and Hariponi, a lady

But I'm neglecting Mellie, who would could never stand for that, Mellie of the imperious mien, and pince-nez eyeglasses and the jet-black hair that looked more wadded than combed, who could impose an absolute silence upon us juveniles at a mere single frowning glance.

Mellie had two <sup>competent</sup> assistants, Flossie Randall and Ursula Ropes (of the old "gold mine" family) who, able as they were, <sup>simpler</sup> sometimes had to rap the front desk to impose <sup>consequently</sup> discipline, which on bad days could sound like Gene Krupa taking off on his drums, sometimes in extreme cases, as I recall, extending their rapping to the offenders' knuckles.

It must have been near the end of Mellie's era -- I almost wrote recall -- that the staff was joined by a gentle young lady called Ruby Verquist, who retired not too many years ago, meanwhile establishing some sort of record for continuous library service, though I've not checked it since I'm trying to confine myself

not writing history but woman

6

[1979]

<sup>periodically</sup> a Miss West, daughter of the effervescent barber Eddie West, who used to trim my hair before nature ~~assaulted~~ <sup>assaulted</sup> him in that task, and took over that chore, and by

Start → largely to early memories and impressions.

When Margaret Dunden became librarian (whom I remember first remembered as a girl taking music lessons from my mother) <sup>became librarian</sup> she was accepted, if <sup>my</sup> memory serves, by Miss Vernquist and Betty Sjolander, later Betty Anderson, whose father ran my favorite candy store when I was a boy ("jawbreakers" were 10 for a penny!) and who later herself succeeded Margaret as librarian until in turn succeeded <sup>upon her retirement</sup> by our present librarian, Linda Peterson, <sup>which</sup> <sup>but</sup> makes four librarians, over a period of seventy-odd years, quite a testimonial both to the library and their <sup>graciously</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>own</sup> professional competence in an exacting and responsible job -- the awakening of juvenile minds. ~~that scares me a little even to think of it.~~

I believe,



[1979]

When janitors

bravely

red-headed

Chief

But I cannot neglect bravely Jeff Charles, library janitor back in the days were still called janitors rather than building custodians. Also Back in those days janitors really janitored, and one of my main memories of Jeff is his softly sweeping his way around the library, armed with an enormous push broom, occasionally pausing to spread a little more of a mysterious aromatic reddish powder before him before entrapping that particular round's accumulation of wadded gum wrappers (African or Spearmint or Juicy Fruit, five <sup>whole</sup> sticks for a nickel!).

8

<sup>knickerbockers</sup> and galoshes (in those days called arties, long before the invention of zippers)

Brayton,

<sup>incidentally</sup>

In winter, <sup>incidentally</sup> under a royal edict from Nellie, we kids were obliged to <sup>and</sup> discard <sup>half-</sup> leave our usually frozen and snowy boots and outer garments in the entrance hall to ~~day~~ near ~~the~~ ever-Houpa clanking radiator which even Nellie couldn't silence. This was <sup>the time</sup> when Jeff Charles doubled as juvenile wardrobe custodian, patiently sorting out the dampish tangle of <sup>assorted</sup> scarves and caps and boots and leggings <sup>help</sup> upon our departure. (I wonder whether <sup>to prevent them from</sup> children's mittens are still attached to long cords that run through the sleeves of the child's coat?)

and wearing 'em into

[10-10]

a daily

These are a few of the many rich memories I have of our local library when I was growing up, including some humorous ones of Jeff Charles breaking up sudden juvenile skirmishes between, say, the Cleveland location gang and my own Barnum street "Irish" gang, to which <sup>of course</sup> Johnny "Mc Voelker" belonged by birth or of Jeff either trying to awaken or quiet <sup>down</sup> an absent-minded fugitive from the downtown saloon district who had wandered in from the cold or, almost daily it seemed, trying to round up some tiny patron's waiting dog that had <sup>somehow</sup> slipped in and had <sup>momentarily</sup> confused the latest best-seller with a best-smeller...

[1979]

a daily



on Barnum street.

I am glad to report that our three daughters followed in their father's footsteps in beating a path to the <sup>very</sup> same library when they ~~to~~ were growing up. Today, <sup>Julie and Tracy</sup> ~~there~~ are teachers (like their paternal grandmother), Julie and Tracie, Julie also specializing in library work, while our old daughter, Elizabeth is, from the reports we get, a dedicated and hard-working member of the library board in downstate Petoskey, so I guess the library bug is catching.

11

12



As I look back on my own

Seventy-odd years of visiting the

local Carnegie library & more and more

I feel that it was one of the most important links -- if not the most

LINK ->

important <sup>link</sup> in the <sup>continuum</sup> chain of such learning <sup>as I progress</sup>

For not only did it help mightily in my learning to read but

it & provided the books that I <sup>was able to</sup> read

stored lore <sup>could</sup> read, <sup>thus</sup> unlocking that vast storehouse of where the great bulk of the world's culture lies.

The <sup>great</sup> genius of the <sup>local</sup> public library is that it not only provides a place to ~~store~~ keep these <sup>silent</sup> quiet reservoirs of culture but ~~that they~~ are near enough and non-private enough so that all may come and enjoy.

12

13 (more)

is precisely what

The genius of the <sup>all</sup> local public libraries might ~~can~~ be summed up in three words: storage, proximity and opportunity. For books are not much good unless one <sup>is able</sup> can readily <sup>to</sup> reach them and <sup>read</sup> open them. This the public library does, providing a place to store these <sup>vast</sup> silent reservoirs of knowledge; near enough to be reached by rich or poor alike: and the opportunity <sup>to</sup> give either <sup>to</sup> stay and read those books <sup>or</sup> take them home to be read at leisure. ~~of this thing I~~

~~STOP HERE~~ seldom mention it, may be one of the greatest ~~unsung~~ strengths of that ancient dream called democracy. ~~At least one reader expresses~~ This reader <sup>expresses</sup> his profound and grateful thanks to all public libraries, particularly to the Carnegie public library on the southwest corner of Main and Beacon streets <sup>in</sup> ~~Delmonico~~ <sup>Delmonico</sup>. At least one of its old <sup>friends</sup> feels that way and ~~seizes off~~ <sup>seizes</sup> by seizing this chance to express his boundless thanks and gratitude to his old library -- indeed to all public libraries -- for such an unforgettable eye-opening ~~experience~~.

13 (more)

these reminiscences

This golden opportunity, though orators seem seldom to mention it, may be one of the great unsung strengths of that ancient dream called democracy. At least one old library fan feels that way, and I cannot end ~~this~~ <sup>remembrance</sup> without expressing my ~~great~~ boundless ~~great~~ thanks and gratitude to my old library for <sup>the large part it played in</sup> opening my eyes to the magic world of books.

X



Important --

As I look back on it I feel that the local Carnegie <sup>libraries</sup> was surely one of the most important links -- if not the most -- in the chain of such "learning" as I know. For more and more I have come to see that it is in books that stored the great bulk of the world's culture and that public libraries hold the <sup>magical</sup> key to the unlocking of that vast <sup>reservoir</sup> store. For the books must not only be there but the places that store them must be near enough and non-private enough for people anyone to read <sup>them</sup>. This, basically, is the genius of the public library: <sup>the presence of</sup> books, people's propinquity <sup>of the books</sup> to those books, plus the people's opportunity to read them -- perhaps surely one of the <sup>basic and</sup> greatest single strengths of this ancient dream called democracy.

and "fun-loving" (though I forget the name of my own books). Then came the Tarzan tales followed by the Jungle Book, and here the story grows a little hozy.



Old

One of my earliest memories is <sup>of almost daily</sup> trotting one block east from the corner house where I was born on Barnum Street to visit <sup>the</sup> <sup>new</sup> Carnegie Public Library. In those days the children's section was still on the main floor, to the right of the entrance, and there I'd sit for hours poring over such treasures as the colorfully illustrated "Brownie" books or the long ramshackle <sup>and spitting</sup> "St. Nicholas" magazine and many others, moving on later to the fairy tales such as Hans Andersen <sup>and</sup> the Grimm brothers, the latter rather aptly named as <sup>many</sup> of those tales, as I recall, <sup>it seems in retrospect,</sup> would make present-day TV violence look tame.

Still later, when I was old enough to withdraw books, came the Horatio Alger <sup>series</sup> ( ~~Pages to Pook~~ <sup>dedicated</sup> to the proposition that the sweetest <sup>start on the</sup> road to success was to ~~show~~ <sup>show</sup> ~~start~~ <sup>start</sup> as a newsboy, begin as a for a boy to take up shining shoes or peddling <sup>ing</sup> newspapers, rather discouraging <sup>news</sup> to a boy tied to a <sup>prosaic</sup> ~~news~~ milk-delivery route. <sup>and Rover boy</sup>

Next I turned to the Tom Swift books, and still even remember the latter's names (Tom, Dick and "fun-loving" Sam) though I forget <sup>some of</sup> those in my own books. Then came the Tarzan tales followed by the Jungle Book, and here the story grows a little hazy.

<sup>crooked and</sup>  
tightly bunched and hair-bunned.

During this era Nellie Brayton ~~is the~~  
ruled the roost, she of the jet black hair and  
pinch glasses, <sup>from which depended a thin</sup> golden chain, a lady of such  
imperial mien who could impose <sup>absolute</sup> silence with a  
mere glance, <sup>whereas</sup> ~~assisted by~~ her two <sup>comfortable</sup> assistants, Flossie  
Randall and Ursula Ropes (of the old "Gold mine"  
family) sometimes had to rap, which they often did  
with the zeal of <sup>a</sup> Gene Krupa, usually on their desk  
but sometimes, I recall, on a <sup>too</sup> persistent noise-maker's  
knuckles. Still later on a gentle <sup>young</sup> lady joined them,  
Ruby Verquist, who carried over after <sup>sweet</sup> Margaret  
Dandon ~~too~~ became librarian and may have set some  
sort of record for continuous library service, over forty  
years, I have heard, though I haven't checked it since I  
am not writing a history; merely <sup>around a casual record</sup> recording some  
early memories and impressions.

when <sup>Ruby Verquist and</sup> Margaret Dandon was librarian  
she was assisted by <sup>and Ruby Verquist, later</sup> Betty Splander, whose father ran  
my favorite candy store when I was a boy, later Betty  
Orellson, who later became librarian when Margaret  
retired, in <sup>turned</sup> succeeded by the present librarian,  
Linda Peterson

Back in the old days Jeff Charles of  
(then) remote Deer Lake location was the  
custodian of the library, then called the janitor,  
back in the days before plumbers  
became sanitary engineers. Anyway,  
back in those days janitors really  
janitored, and my main recollection  
of Mr. Charles is his softly sweeping  
his way, occasionally pausing to  
spread a little of more aromatic  
red or reddish powder as he  
swept up the day's accumulation of  
wadded gum wrappers.

When Jeff wasn't sweeping he  
acted as a sort of juvenile  
custodian of wardrobe, especially  
in winter (when we had to leave  
our outer garments to dry by the  
stair climbing entrance door  
radiator - which even Nellie  
Brayton couldn't touch), spending  
it ~~Jeff~~ must have been from  
sorting out the tangle of boots and

History and

public general  
Some idea of the importance of  
libraries may be gained by reflecting that  
the vast bulk of the world's culture and  
general knowledge is stored away in books, much  
of it written by ~~him~~ This is comforting to know  
but does ~~it~~ it does little good to know  
that to expand the horizon of the average  
citizen, <sup>or adult</sup> child, if he or she can't <sup>even</sup> get to read them.  
In other words not only must the books be  
there but readily <sup>able</sup> ~~available~~ to be reached  
and read; that is which is the definition.

daily

magical

One of my earliest memories  
is trotting a block east from the  
~~our~~ house where I was born  
on <sup>W. 4th</sup> Barnum Street and  
visiting the "new" library. In  
those days the children's section  
was on the main floor, to the  
right of the entrance, and there  
I'd sit for hours poring over  
such treasures as the old  
St. Nicholas magazine and  
the many others, moving <sup>on</sup> later  
to the fairy tales (some of which  
made present-day TV "violence"  
look tame), thence on to the  
Horatio Alger stories, <sup>! I can't find</sup>  
celebrating the rewards of toil,  
on to the Tom Swift books  
and the Rover boys (Tom,

in  
Dunder

out the  
very shelf)

fun-loving  
Dick and Sam -- though I  
can't remember some of the  
characters in my <sup>own</sup> old books).

(<sup>sweet</sup> Margaret Dunder <sup>lately</sup> <sup>came</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>distance</sup> <sup>Deep</sup> <sup>Lake</sup> <sup>location</sup>)  
Finally Jeff Charles  
was the gamitor, Mellic  
Brayton of the jet black  
hair and pins neg. glasses  
ruled the roost, assisted for  
many years by Ursula  
Roper (of the old "Gold Mine"  
family) and Flossie  
Randall, all dedicated to  
opening our eyes to the world  
of books, as well as  
occasionally shutting our  
mouths so that others  
might <sup>enjoy</sup> them...

especially in winter,

Kindly Jeff Charles  
of the distant Deer Lake  
Location was the janitor,  
who also doubled as a  
kind of apparel-detector

often sorting out the tangle of  
boots and coats and scarves  
and <sup>mittens</sup> mittens we left to dry  
by the clanking entrance  
radiator -- which even Nellie  
Brayton couldn't hush.

In retrospect I consider  
the Carnegie Library as the  
one of the most important steps --  
-- if not the most important --  
in <sup>the</sup> chain of such learning as  
I possess. For it not only did

it help mightily to teach  
<sup>equally important,</sup>  
tempt me to read but, to

Love never and be  
<sup>power and evocative</sup>  
stirred by the magic of  
<sup>happy and</sup>  
words. <sup>am, proud to</sup>

Today, some seventy-  
odd years later, I join  
in paying it my profound  
respects and <sup>my</sup> heartfelt  
thanks for all the <sup>eyes and</sup> doors it  
has opened <sup>not only</sup> for me and <sup>but</sup> many  
others.



(sometimes)

long

I look back upon the local Carnegie library as surely one of the most important links -- if not the most -- in the chain of such "learning" as I possess. For not only did it help mightily for me to learn ~~to~~ to read and spell words, all those <sup>mysterious</sup> ~~strange~~ words, but it unlocked my at least childish imagination to some of the <sup>wondrous</sup> power and magic and, yes, just plain 'larmin' lurking in all those ordered rows of books so <sup>cramped with</sup> full of other <sup>people's</sup> words.

Kunder

---

and leggings and scarves and mittens  
(though the latter were often  
attached to each other by long cords  
threaded through the ~~sewing~~ arms of  
the jumble of coats.)

[1979]

aquiline nose, Nellie of the

X

But I'm neglecting Nellie, who would quickly frown on that, Nellie of the imperious mien with her

rimless

forever clasped to and further pencil may eyelashes furrowing the bridge of her nose

jet-black hair so severely curled and wadded and <sup>clasped and</sup> hairpenned that one <sup>had the illusion of viewing</sup> ~~viewed it as through~~ a wire cage, Nellie, who could strike juvenile impose an absolute juvenile silence by a single frowning stare

[1979]

public  
the many

These are but some of memories I  
 have of the our local Carnegie library,  
 which <sup>also</sup> includes some ~~shoppers~~ memories  
 of Jeff Charles ~~and trying to record up~~  
~~and remove some stray dog bent on~~  
~~confusing its mind or stop a fight that~~  
 either ~~either~~ <sup>or</sup> ~~away~~ <sup>an occasional</sup>  
 had crashed or, quiet a fatigued drunk who had  
 wandered in from the cold or, often as not,  
 trying to <sup>bring his friend</sup> record up some stray dog that  
 had slipped in and was had, <sup>manfully</sup> confessed  
 the latest best-seller with a best-  
 smeller...

white

Julie and Gracie, Julie also

almost daily

visiting

a

My three daughters early caught the same library bug that I had, ~~from~~ from the same house, in fact, ~~teaching~~ ~~to~~ the same library. Today two are teachers, one specializing in library work and ~~and~~ our oldest daughter, Elizabeth, is ~~a member~~ ~~I~~ ~~hear~~ ~~a~~ ~~very~~ a member of the library board in Retrosky.

[1980]  
aquiline nose, Mellie  
of the

~~I am sorry to say that~~ I never got to  
know Mellie Brayton very well, I am sorry to  
say, as I suspect that underneath her  
queenly exterior dwelt an interesting,  
intelligent, <sup>and</sup> humorous person.

jet-black hair, curled  
and wadded and, I remember  
that she <sup>had the illusion of</sup> ~~was~~ as though  
a wire cage, Mellie, who would  
strike someone's senses an  
absolute genuine silence by  
a single frowning stare.

Our daughters especially remember one of our neighbors when we lived on Barnum Street, Phyllis Berring, who seemed to capture the hearts of the younger patrons with her patience and continued interest in what might interest them and who played a large part, I am told, in creating the attractive new juvenile quarters out of the old basement.

[ THIS TO FOLLOW THE TOP TWO LINES OF THE TYPED VERSION ON P. 6, JUST BEFORE THE FIRST MENTION OF JEFF CHARLES, "But I cannot neglect, etc." ]

In these days the children's section was still on the main floor, to the right of the entrance, and there I'd crouch for hours poring over such treasures as the illustrated "Grimm's" books or the long-vanished St. Nicholas magazine, so filled with absorbing tales and rhymes and hand-drawn pictures, besides all the other children's books and magazines I can no longer recall.

When, with their great help, I finally learned to read I moved on to the thrilling fairy tales of Hans Andersen and the Brothers Grimm, the latter well-named, as I look back on it, many of their

ONE PATRON'S MEMORIES OF THE ISHPEMING CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
(ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY)

One of my earliest memories is of almost daily trotting from my house on Barnum street to visit the "new" Carnegie public library only a block away. While I probably couldn't have explained it in those days, my house lay exactly one block west of the new library, also on a southwest corner, with but four other houses intervening between my home and that impressive new corner building with those majestic reddish pillars standing out in front and all those exciting books waiting inside.

In those days the children's section was still on the main floor, to the right of the entrance, and there I'd crouch for hours poring over such treasures as the illustrated "Brownie" books or the long-vanished St. Nicholas magazine, so filled with absorbing tales and rhymes and hand-drawn pictures, besides all the other children's books and magazines I can no longer recall.

When, with their great help, I finally learned to read I moved on to the thrilling fairy tales of Hans Andersen and the brothers Grimm, the latter well-named, as I look back on it, many of their



yarns making today's TV violence look almost tame. I can even recall some of the tenser dialogue from one of my favorite tales, "Little Red Ridinghood", or at least I think I can: "What nice long white teeth you have, Grandmama," said Little Red Ridinghood.

"All the better to eat you with, my dear," hissed the wicked wolf disguised as the child's grandmother, widening its slaving jaws.

After that it was almost with relief that I turned to the Horatio Alger books, an endless series evidently devoted to the proposition that the one sure road to success for any boy invariably lay either in shining shoes or peddling newspapers, rather discouraging news to a local lad who had only four stoves to take care of in winter and his only peddling route being confined to that of delivering tin cans of fresh milk around the neighborhood.

Next came the Tom Swift books, an early series about the hero's endless adventures with all the latest inventions and gadgets, such as "Tom Swift and his Motorcycle", a kind of early introduction to modern science-fiction, I'd guess. Then there were the three plucky Rover boys, who <sup>sc</sup>names I can't ever forget (though I sometimes fail

to remember the names of characters in my own books), Tom, Dick and "fun-loving" Sam. Then came the exciting Tarzan tales (can I really still recall that the lion was called Simba?) swiftly followed by Kipling's Jungle Book, in which I seem to recall there was a little boy called Mowgli, by which time I was such a confirmed and hopeless literary soak--ever reading, reading, reading--that the names begin to blur.

But I shall never forget the librarian who ruled the roost during those earlier years, Nellie Brayton, widowed sister of the wife of Doctor George G. Barnett, who helped usher me into the world, himself the father of my boyhood friend and schoolmate, Kenneth Barnett, who (small-town memories are so interwoven) played the part of my father in our high school's senior class play...

But I'm neglecting Nellie Brayton, who'd frown on that, Nellie of the small rimless pince nez eyeglasses forever tightly clasped to her already deeply furrowed aquiline nose, Nellie of the jet black hair which she invariably wore so closely curled and imprisoned by so many jewelled clasps and assorted gleaming hairpins that my main

recollection is one of perceiving occasional protruding tufts and wads of black hair as though viewed through a wire cage ( though I don't think she wore a hair net, so popular at the time), Nellie of the imperious mien who could by a single frowning glare impose absolute silence on whole regiments of naughty whispering juveniles. I guess I was far too young to get to know Nellie very well, I regret to say, as I suspect that beneath her rather forbidding queenly exterior dwelt an interesting, humorous and independent spirit; in any case I've never forgotten her.

Nellie at her peak had two assistants, Flossie Randall and Ursula Ropes ( of the old "gold mine" family) who, able as they were, lacked Nellie's hypnotic stare and consequently were reduced to rapping the front desk to impose their discipline, a staccato effect which on bad days could rival Gene Krupa himself taking off on his drums, sometimes in extreme cases, as I recall, the ladies having to transfer their rappings to the offender's knuckles.

It must have been near the end of Nellie's era--I almost wrote reign--that the staff was joined by a gentle young woman called

Ruby Vernquist, who retired not too many years ago, meanwhile

establishing some sort of local record for continuous library service,

I think, though I've not checked it since I'm not writing history but

trying to confine myself to early memories and impressions.

When Margaret Dundon (whom I first remembered as a girl taking music lessons from my mother) became librarian she was assisted, if

the effervescent barber, Art West, often called Eddie by his friends,

who periodically used to <sup>†</sup> <sub>↑</sub> hin my hair before nature graciously took

over that chore free of charge, and by Betty Sjolander, later Betty

Anderson, whose father ran my favorite candy store when I was a boy

("jawbreakers", 10 for a penny!) and who later herself succeeded

Margaret Dundon as librarian until in turn succeeded upon her own

retirement by our present librarian, Linda Peterson. This makes but

four librarians, I believe, over a period of seventy-odd years, quite

a testimonial both to the library and to their own graciousness and

professional competence in an exacting and responsible job—one of

the main ones in my view being the guidance and awakening of juvenile minds.

But I cannot neglect kindly red-headed Jeff Charles, who lived out near distant Deer Lake and kept a talking parrot, library janitor back in the days when janitors were still called janitors rather than building custodians. Back in those days <sup>too,</sup> janitors ~~also~~ really janitored, and one of my main memories of Jeff is his softly sweeping his way around the library, armed with an enormous push broom, occasionally pausing to spread a little more of a mysterious aromatic reddish powder before him before finally entrapping and emptying that particular round's accumulation of wadded gum wrappers (Yucatan, Spearmint, or Juicy Fruit, five whole sticks for a nickel!).

In winter, evidently under a royal edict from Nellie Brayton, we kids upon entering were obliged to leave our usually wet and snowy rubber boots or buckled galoshes (in those days called either goldseals or artics, long before the invention of zippers) and outer garments piled in the entrance hall near a tall ever-clanking

radiator which even Nellie couldn't silence. This was the season when Jeff Charles often doubled as juvenile wardrobe custodian, patiently sorting out and wrestling us back into the steaming tangle of assorted woolen scarves and caps and boots and leggings upon our departure. (I wonder whether, to help prevent their loss, children's mittens are still attached to long cords that run through the sleeves of the child's coat?).

These are a few of the many memories I have of our local library when I was growing up, including some humorous ones of Jeff Charles breaking up sudden juvenile skirmishes between, say, members of the Cleveland location gang and my own Barnum street "Irish" gang, to which of course Johnny "McVoelker" naturally belonged by birth, or of Jeff either trying to awaken or quiet down an absent-minded fugitive from the downtown saloon district who had wandered in from the cold or, almost daily it seemed, trying to round up some tiny patron's overzealous dog that had somehow slipped in and was, to the consternation of the front desk, momentarily confusing the latest best-seller with a best-smeller...

I am glad to report that our three daughters followed in their father's footsteps in beating a daily path to the very same library when they too were growing up on Barnum street. Today Julie and Gracie are teachers (like their paternal grandmother), Julie also specializing in library work, while our oldest daughter Elizabeth is, we hear, a dedicated and hard-working member of the library board in downstate Petoskey, so possibly the public library bug is catching.

\*

As I look back on my own seventy-odd years of visiting the local Carnegie library more and more I feel that it was one of the most important--if not the most important link--in the continuous chain of such learning as I possess. For not only did it help mightily in my own learning to read but it provided most of the books that I could read, thus un|locking that vast storehouse of accumulated lore where the great bulk of the world's culture lies.

John Voelker

Spring 1979

The great genius and strength of all local public libraries might be summed up in three words: storage, propinquity and opportunity. For books aren't much good unless the people are able readily not only to reach but to read them. This is precisely the great service a public library provides, a place to store and keep track of these vast reservoirs of knowledge; near enough to be reached by rich or poor alike; and the opportunity given either to linger and read those books in quiet pleasant surroundings or to take them home and read them at leisure.

This golden opportunity, sounding so simple that orators seldom bother to mention it, may be one of the great unsung strengths of that ancient dream called democracy. At least one old library fan feels that way, and I cannot end these passing reminiscences without expressing my heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude to my old library in Ishpeming for the large part it played in opening one child's eyes to the magic world of books.

John Voelker

Spring 1979



B: 2 final, please. J.

ONE PATRONS MEMORIES OF ISHPEMING CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
THE  
(ON IT'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY)

One of my earliest memories is of almost daily trotting from my house on Barnum street to visit the "new" Carnegie public library only a block away. While I probably couldn't have explained it then, my house, where I was born in 1903, lay exactly one block west of the new library, also on a southwest corner, with but four other houses intervening between my home and that impressive new corner building with those majestic reddish tall red pillars standing out in front and all those exciting books waiting inside.

In those days the children's section was still on the main floor, to the right of the entrance, and there I'd crouch for hours poring over such treasures as the illustrated "Brownie" books or the long-vanished St. Nicholas magazine, so filled with absorbing tales and rhymes and hand-drawn pictures, besides all the other children's books and magazines I can no longer recall.

When, with their great help I finally learned to read, I moved on to the thrilling fairy tales of Hans Andersen and the brothers Grimm, the latter well-named, as I look back on it, many of their yarns

making today's TV violence look <sup>almost</sup> ~~mighty~~ tame. I can even recall some  
of the tenser dialogue from one of my favorites <sup>tales</sup>, "Little Red Ridinghood",  
or at least I think I can: "What nice long white teeth you have,  
Grandmama," said Little Red Ridinghood.

"All the better to eat you with, my dear," hissed the wicked  
wolf disguised as <sup>her</sup> the child's grandmother, <sup>lunging at the child</sup> suddenly closing in with  
<sup>widening its slavering</sup> gaping jaws.

After that it was almost with relief that I turned to the Horatio  
Alger books, an endless series <sup>evidently</sup> devoted to the proposition that the  
one <sup>sure</sup> road to success for any boy invariably <sup>lay either in</sup> began by shining shoes or  
peddling newspapers, rather discouraging news to a local lad who had

only four stoves to take care of in winter and his peddling confined  
to a mere prosaic milk-delivery route, <sup>the only route being</sup> that of delivering <sup>tin cans of fresh</sup> milk around the  
<sup>from the family farm to the neighbors.</sup>

Next came the Tom Swift books, an early series about the hero's  
endless adventures with all the latest <sup>inventions and such as "Tom Swift"</sup> new gadgets, a kind of <sup>early introduction to</sup> preview  
to modern science-fiction, I'd guess, <sup>when there were</sup> not to mention the doings of

<sup>sometimes</sup> the three plucky Rover boys, whose names I can't ever forget (though  
I fail to remember <sup>often</sup> those of <sup>the names</sup> ~~some~~ <sup>characters</sup> in my own books), Tom, Dick and "fun-  
loving" Sam. Then came the exciting Tarzan tales (can I really still

recall that the lion was called Simba?) swiftly followed by Kipling's  
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by which time I was such a confirmed and hopeless literary soak--ever  
reading, reading, reading--that the <sup>names</sup> story begins to <sup>blur.</sup> get a little hazy.

But I shall never forget the librarian who ruled the roost during  
<sup>those</sup> <sup>years,</sup> this earlier <sup>era,</sup> Nellie Brayton, widowed sister of the wife of Doctor

George G. Barnett, who helped usher me into the world, though my

~~memory of this event is a trifle hazy,~~ himself the father of my boy-

hood friend and schoolmate, Kenneth Barnett, who played the part of

<sup>high school's</sup> my father in our senior class play... <sup>(small-town memories are so intertwined)</sup>

But I'm neglecting Nellie Brayton, Nellie of the small rimless  
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*John Volker*  
*Spring 1979*