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VICTORY BOOKS SCRIPT 9AF (VIC 1) 29/49 Liberty
Ask Your State Library
Wednesday 1 P.M.
October 28, 1942
Participating:
Mr. Morris
Mrs. Ruth Stratton
Private Charles Woodbury

BOOKS FOR SOLDIERS

Theme music with announcer's voice breaking in to say Ask Your State Library.
Music gradually fades.

Morris: THE TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED ON THE STATE LIBRARY PROGRAM THIS AFTERNOON IS "BOOKS FOR SOLDIERS" AND I SEE WE HAVE A SOLDIER, PRIVATE CHARLES WOODBURY, FROM CAMP ADAIR, TAKING PART. SURELY A SOLDIER WOULD BE A LOGICAL PERSON TO TALK ABOUT SUCH A SUBJECT, BUT I AM WONDERING ABOUT MRS. RUTH STRATTON, THE WPA SUPERVISOR OF THE ARMY BOOK CENTER WHO IS ALSO HERE IN THE STUDIO FOR THIS DISCUSSION. JUST WHAT IS AN ARMY BOOK CENTER, MRS. STRATTON, AND WHERE IS IT?

Stratton: THE ARMY BOOK CENTER IN OREGON IS IN SALEM, AT THE STATE LIBRARY, AND IS ONE OF FIVE IN THIS 9TH SERVICE COMMAND AREA. THESE CENTERS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AS COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION POINTS FOR THE BOOKS DONATED IN THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN. THIS HAS BEEN DONE THRU THE COOPERATION OF THE ARMY AND THE WAR SERVICES SECTION OF THE WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION.

Morris: IS THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN CONTINUING? I THOUGHT THAT WAS ALL OVER!

Stratton: OH NO, INDEED! IT IS TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. AS YOU KNOW, OUR ARMED FORCES ARE MULTIPLYING RAPIDLY AND THE NEED FOR MORE AND MORE GOOD BOOKS IS INCREASING PROPORTIONATELY.

Morris: BUT ARE THE SOLDIERS INTERESTED IN READING - DO YOU THINK THEY REALLY WANT BOOKS? HOW ABOUT THAT, PRIVATE WOODBURY?

Woodbury: INDEED THEY DO. IN FACT, THE WAR DEPARTMENT TOOK A SURVEY AMONG THE ARMY CAMPS TO FIND OUT THEIR RECREATIONAL PREFERENCES. FIRST CHOICE WAS FOR MOVIES AND SECOND WAS FOR READING MATERIAL.

Stratton: AND YOU SHOULD SEE THE REQUESTS THAT COME IN TO THE STATE LIBRARY FROM SOLDIERS WANTING CERTAIN BOOKS!

Morris: DO YOU MEAN THAT SOLDIERS ARE SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTED IN READING TO ACTUALLY WRITE IN AND ASK FOR BOOKS?

Stratton: ^{Mr. Morris,} LET ME READ YOU PART OF JUST ONE LETTER FROM A SOLDIER STATIONED IN ALASKA. HE ASKED FOR GUNTHER'S "INSIDE EUROPE" AND "INSIDE ASIA". HE SAYS:

"THE BOOKS THAT YOU SENT ME HAVE ARRIVED. I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR SENDING THEM AND AM ENJOYING THEM VERY MUCH. THEY WILL BE READ BY MANY OTHERS BESIDES MYSELF AND APPRECIATED JUST AS MUCH. IT IS SERVICES SUCH AS YOURS THAT MAKE A SOLDIER FEEL THAT THE PEOPLE BACK HOME ARE THINKING OF HIM. FROM WHAT LIMITED READING I HAVE DONE, I KNOW THAT THE NAZIS EQUIP THEIR SOLDIERS WITH THE BEST OF EVERYTHING AND THEY DO NOT NEGLECT HIS MIND. AS A RESULT, THE SOLDIER FEELS THAT HE IS TRULY IMPORTANT AND THAT HE IS REALLY SUPPORTED BY THE CIVILIANS."

Morris: WELL, THAT SURELY CONVINCES ME THAT SOLDIERS DO WANT BOOKS!

~~Stratton: YES, AND UNCONSCIOUSLY THAT SOLDIER HAS SHOWN US THE REASON WHY ARMY LIBRARY SERVICE IS UNDER THE MORALE DIVISION OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT.~~

Morris: BY THE WAY, PRIVATE WOODBURY, ARE THESE BOOKS DONATED IN THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN THE ONLY BOOKS THE SOLDIERS HAVE?

Woodbury: NO, THE WAR DEPARTMENT PROVIDES BOOKS, LIBRARY QUARTERS AND PROFESSIONAL CIVILIAN LIBRARIANS FOR THE LARGER MILITARY RESERVATIONS. FOR INSTANCE, AT CAMP ADAIR WE HAVE TWO OF OUR OWN LIBRARIES AND TWO PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED LIBRARIANS. BUT WE STILL NEED MANY ADDITIONAL BOOKS TO SUPPLEMENT OUR OWN COLLECTION. IN FACT, WE HAD A NEED FOR BOOKS LONG BEFORE OUR OWN LIBRARIES WERE READY, AND MRS. STRATTON SAVED THE DAY BY SENDING US ABOUT 4000. HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO HAVE THAT MANY BOOKS ALL READY FOR US, MRS. STRATTON?

Stratton: WELL, THAT REPRESENTED MANY LONG HOURS OF VOLUNTEER WORK BY THE STATE LIBRARY STAFF. MANY A NIGHT, THOSE GIRLS CAME BACK AFTER THEIR REGULAR DAY'S WORK TO SORT AND PROCESS THE BOOKS THAT WERE COLLECTED IN THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN. THE PEOPLE OF OREGON GAVE NEARLY 75,000 BOOKS IN THIS DRIVE, AND ABOUT 40,000 OF THEM CAME IN TO THE STATE LIBRARY, THE COLLECTION POINT FOR THE STATE. THE OTHERS, WHICH WERE COLLECTED IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY, WERE SORTED AND DISTRIBUTED IN THAT AREA BY THE PORTLAND LIBRARY.

Morris: 40,000 BOOKS TO BE HANDLED! THAT CERTAINLY MUST HAVE MEANT A LOT OF WORK! WERE ALL THOSE MAILED IN?

Stratton: SOME WERE, BUT MOST OF THEM WERE BROUGHT IN BY THE WPA LIBRARY PROJECT BOOKMOBILE. WE ESTABLISHED AREA COLLECTION POINTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND THE BOOKMOBILE MADE STOPS AT THOSE POINTS. WE CERTAINLY CAME BACK FROM THOSE TRIPS WITH THE TRUCK PILED HIGH!

Morris: THEN YOUR WORK AT THE ARMY BOOK CENTER, MRS. STRATTON, IS TO PREPARE THESE BOOKS FOR ARMY USE?

Stratton: YES, THAT'S RIGHT. AFTER THESE BOOKS ARE SORTED AND THE UNSUITABLE ONES DISCARDED, THEY ARE TURNED OVER TO WPA WORKERS. THEY STAMP THE BOOKS WITH THE ARMY IDENTIFICATION, TYPE BOOK CARDS, AND PUT IN BOOK POCKETS AND DATE DUE SLIPS. THEN WHEN THE BOOKS LEAVE THE CENTER, THEY ARE ALL READY FOR IMMEDIATE USE. TO DATE, WE'VE SENT OUT ~~ABOUT 14,000~~ ^{over 16,000} BOOKS TO VARIOUS ARMY POSTS AND CAMPS. ^{ready} *Have 4,500 more ready to be picked up by army trucks*

Morris: THAT'S FINE! BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE SMALLER DETACHMENTS SOMETIMES STATIONED IN RATHER ISOLATED AREAS - IN THE PLACES WHERE THERE SURELY ISN'T VERY MUCH FOR THEM TO DO FOR RECREATION? THEY MUST FEEL LIKE THE "FORGOTTEN MAN".

Stratton: OH, THEY AREN'T FORGOTTEN! WE HAVE A SPECIAL WAY OF GETTING BOOKS OUT TO THEM. WE'VE MADE UP TRAVELING LIBRARIES OF ABOUT 40 BOOKS EACH, COVERING A WIDE VARIETY OF READING INTERESTS, BOTH FICTION AND NON-FICTION. THESE ARE PACKED IN WOODEN BOXES PROVIDED BY THE ARMY, NUMBERED CONSECUTIVELY, AND THEN ROTATED BY THE COMMANDING

Mr. Morris
OFFICERS AMONG THE DETACHMENTS UNDER THEIR SUPERVISION. *We've sent out 48 of these traveling librs. already & 10 more are waiting to be called for.*

Morris: SAY, THAT IS A FINE WAY, AND THOSE SOLDIERS CERTAINLY MUST APPRECIATE HAVING SOMETHING TO READ WHEN THEY ARE OFF DUTY WITH NOTHING TO DO. I'M DECIDEDLY INTERESTED IN HEARING JUST WHAT DOES BECOME OF THE BOOKS DONATED IN THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN AND HOW THEY ARE DISTRIBUTED. BUT ----- WELL, NOW MAYBE I'M GETTING MY FOOT IN IT WHEN I SAY THIS-----BUT--

Stratton: GO AHEAD - OUT WITH IT! HE WHO HESITATES IS LOST, YOU KNOW, AND I'D HATE TO THINK OF YOU STILL PONDERING OVER SOME QUESTION THAT HAS GONE UNSOLVED DURING THIS DISCUSSION!

Morris: ALL RIGHT THEN - HERE GOES! I'M WONDERING ABOUT THIS "DONATION" IDEA. I'VE KNOWN-OF DRIVES FOR DONATIONS OF VARIOUS KINDS WHERE SOMETIMES THE DONATIONS TURN OUT TO BE THINGS PEOPLE WANT TO GET RID OF! THAT HASN'T HAPPENED IN THIS CASE, HAS IT, MRS. STRATTON?

Stratton: WELL, I MUST ADMIT, THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES WHEN I THOUGHT A FEW PEOPLE MUST HAVE GIVEN IN TO THAT URGE! HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF THE MANY BOOKS WE DID HAVE TO DISCARD BECAUSE THEY REALLY WERE NOT SUITABLE, A GREAT MANY VERY FINE THINGS WERE GIVEN. BUT NOT ENOUGH, I'M AFRAID! AND THAT'S WHY WE HAVE PRIVATE WOODBURY HERE TO TALK ABOUT BOOKS FOR SOLDIERS, FOR AS HE HAS SEEN AND USED SOME OF THE BOOKS WE SENT DOWN TO CAMP ADAIR, PERHAPS THIS WILL REPRESENT THE "PRODUCER TO CONSUMER" IDEA! I'M ANXIOUS TO ASK HIM SEVERAL QUESTIONS. / FIRST OF ALL, PRIVATE WOODBURY, DO YOU THINK THE BOOKS GIVEN IN THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN HAVE REALLY BEEN THE THINGS SOLDIERS ARE INTERESTED IN READING?

Woodbury: YES, FOR THE MOST PART. IN FACT, I WAS REALLY SURPRISED TO SEE HOW MANY NEW TITLES WE RECEIVED AND THE OLDER BOOKS ALSO SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN SELECTED AS BEING OF EQUAL INTEREST. OF COURSE, IN THE ARMY THERE IS JUST AS WIDE A VARIETY OF READING INTERESTS AS THERE IS AMONG ANY SECTION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

Stratton: YES, I'M SURE THAT IS VERY TRUE. BUT JUST WHAT DO SOLDIERS LIKE TO READ?

Woodbury: NOW, REALLY DON'T YOU THINK THAT IS RATHER A STUPID QUESTION? AFTER ALL, YOU KNOW, WE AREN'T SOME WEIRD, UNUSUAL SPECIES THAT REQUIRES A CERTAIN TYPE OF READING, SOMETHING UNHEARD OF AND VERY DIFFERENT! OUR READING INTERESTS ARE JUST THE SAME AS THOSE OF ANYONE ELSE! AND BECAUSE WE ARE NOW WEARING UNIFORMS DOESN'T MAKE US ANY DIFFERENT! WE NATURALLY LIKE TO READ THE SAME THINGS WE DID BEFORE WE WENT INTO THE ARMY!

Stratton: WELL, AFTER ALL, I'M ONLY A CIVILIAN AND HAD TO ASK! I KNOW THAT'S A FOOLISH QUESTION, BUT I'LL WAGER I'M NOT THE FIRST ONE WHO HAS EVER ASKED IT! BUT PERHAPS THIS WILL BE A BETTER ONE - WHAT KIND OF BOOKS ARE MOST IN DEMAND IN THESE ARMY LIBRARIES - IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT KINDS OF BOOKS DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE COLLECTED IN THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN?

Woodbury: WELL, FIRST I WOULD SAY WE WANT MORE OF THE NEW TITLES - THE BEST SELLERS, LIKE THE BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB AND THE LITERARY GUILD SELECTIONS. AND WE WANT RECENT NON-FICTION, TOO - LIKE "MISSION TO MOSCOW", "BERLIN DIARY", AND BOOKS OF THAT TYPE. WE ALSO LIKE NEW TRAVEL BOOKS. FOR INSTANCE CLUNE'S "ISLES OF SPICE" AND THAT ONE ABOUT AUSTRALIA, "I HEARD THE ANZACS SINGING" ARE ABOUT THE PART OF THE WORLD EVERYONE IS INTERESTED IN RIGHT NOW.

Stratton: WHAT ABOUT THE EVER POPULAR WESTERNS AND ADVENTURE, AND THE MYSTERY STORIES - THE WHO-DONE-ITS - DON'T TELL ME YOU SCORN THOSE!

Woodbury: OH, GOSH NO, WE ALWAYS LIKE THOSE, AND AFTER A HARD DAYS' WORK THEY DO "HIT THE SPOT". BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE DON'T WANT, AND THAT'S A LOT OF THE FICTION THAT WAS POPULAR TWENTY OR THIRTY YEARS AGO!

Stratton: WHAT! YOU DON'T WISH TO BE THE RECIPIENT OF SOME OF THE BOOKS WHICH MADE SUCH NICE CHRISTMAS GIFTS BACK IN ABOUT 1912?

Woodbury: DEFINITELY NO, A THOUSAND TIMES NO, IN FACT! AS DESPERATE AS A SOLDIER MAY GET FOR SOMETHING TO READ, ESPECIALLY IF HE IS MILES FROM ANY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OF ANY SORT, HE REALLY DOES NOT WANT JUST ANY READING MATTER OF ANY KIND, IN ANY CONDITION!

Stratton: THEN THESE BOOKS WHICH PERHAPS WERE "BEST SELLERS" SOME YEARS BACK, AREN'T OF MUCH INTEREST TO THE SOLDIER OF TODAY? YOU KNOW, PRIVATE WOODBURY, SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT A GOOD STORY IS ALWAYS A GOOD STORY, THAT IT NEVER GROWS RUSTY WITH THE YEARS!

Woodbury: WELL, ALL I CAN SAY TO THAT IS, THAT IF THE DONOR WOULD RE-READ SOME OF THOSE OLD STORIES FORMERLY SO POPULAR, IT WOULD BE VERY EVIDENT THAT THE PLOT AND THE STILTED CONVERSATION ARE AS OUT-DATED AS THE ILLUSTRATIONS!

Morris: YES, THOSE ILLUSTRATIONS SHOWING "THE LITTLE WOMAN" ALL DONE UP IN A HIGH-NECKED, LONG SKIRTED NUMBER, CERTAINLY WOULDN'T MAKE ME WANT TO READ THE BOOK EITHER!

Woodbury: AND ANOTHER THING- THOSE OLD NOVELS OF THAT VINTAGE ARE USUALLY BOUND IN DULL, DREARY LOOKING COVERS, AND I TELL YOU, WHEN YOUR WORLD IS ALMOST SOLIDLY KHAKI COLORED, A NEW BOOK IN A BRIGHT ATTRACTIVE COVER MEANS A LOT!

Stratton: YES, I CAN CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND YOUR VIEWPOINT, AND, OF COURSE, WE ARE NOT REFERRING TO THE CLASSICS WHICH NEVER GROW OLD AND ARE ALWAYS GOOD READING. / AND NOW, JUST ONE OR TWO MORE QUESTIONS, PRIVATE WOODBURY. HOW ABOUT TECHNICAL BOOKS. DO YOU WANT THOSE OR DOES THE WAR DEPARTMENT SUPPLY THOSE FOR YOU?

Woodbury: OH, WE NEVER HAVE ENOUGH OF THOSE. WE ALWAYS WANT MORE BOOKS OF NEW TECHNICAL MATERIAL, LIKE BOOKS ON ELECTRICITY, AVIATION, RADIO, MECHANICS, METEOROLOGY FOR INSTANCE. BUT NEW THINGS, REMEMBER - THOSE PUBLISHED WITHIN THE LAST FEW YEARS ARE MOST DESIRABLE.

Stratton: NOT TOO MANY TEXT BOOKS THEN, ESPECIALLY THE OLDER ONES. WHAT ABOUT HUMOR, BOOKS ON VARIOUS HOBBIES AND THINGS LIKE THAT?

Woodbury: YES, WE LIKE THOSE. BOOKS OF CARTOONS AND JOKES, AND GAMES AND PUZZLES ARE VERY ACCEPTABLE, TOO.

Stratton: WELL, PRIVATE WOODBURY, YOU'VE CERTAINLY GIVEN US A GOOD IDEA OF THE KINDS OF BOOKS SOLDIERS REALLY WANT, THE KIND OF BOOKS WE HOPE TO RECEIVE FOR YOU THRU THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN.

Morris: I'VE BEEN LISTENING TO THIS CONVERSATION WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING FOR QUITE A TIME. AND I'M WONDERING, PRIVATE WOODBURY, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE ARMY AND HOW DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT BOOKS?

Woodbury: I'VE ONLY BEEN IN THE ARMY ABOUT 5 MONTHS AND PREVIOUS TO THAT, I WAS A LIBRARIAN IN THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Morris: WELL, NO WONDER YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT BOOKS! // *cut?* BUT IN THE ARMY SUCH A SHORT TIME - SAY YOU AREN'T THE NEW RECRUIT, BY ANY CHANCE, ARE YOU, WHO ALWAYS GOT THE COMMANDS MIXED UP AND WHEN ON S ENTRY DUTY ONE NIGHT INSTEAD OF "HALT, WHO GOES THERE" SHOUTED "HALT, SEE WHO'S HERE"?

Woodbury: OH, NO, I'M NOT THAT SOLDIER. YOU SEE, I WAS IN THE REFERENCE DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY WHERE WE ALWAYS KNEW THE RIGHT ANSWERS IN ADVANCE!

Morris: WELL, AT LEAST IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO SAY "HALT, SEE WHO'S HERE - A LIBRARIAN!" // AND YOU'VE CLEARED UP A LOT OF QUESTIONS I HAD IN MY MIND ABOUT THIS WHOLE BUSINESS OF BOOKS FOR SOLDIERS. SUMMING IT ALL UP, I'D SAY THAT SOLDIERS WANT UP-TO-DATE MATERIAL OF ALL KINDS, BOTH FICTION AND NON-FICTION, THE BEST SELLERS, RECENT TRAVEL AND BIOGRAPHY, AND BOOKS ON CURRENT TOPICS, NEW TECHNICAL MATERIAL. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE SAME KIND OF BOOKS AS THE REST OF US LIKE TO READ. AM I RIGHT, MRS. STRATTON, ARE THOSE THE KIND OF BOOKS YOU ARE HOPING WILL CONTINUE TO BE GIVEN IN THE VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN?

Stratton: YES, INDEED, THOSE ARE JUST EXACTLY THE KIND WE ARE HOPING WILL BE SENT OR BROUGHT IN TO THE ARMY BOOK CENTER AT THE STATE LIBRARY. ^{at Salem} THESE MEN IN THE ARMY ARE GIVING US THEIR BEST AND WE CANNOT DO ANYTHING LESS THAN OUR BEST FOR THEM.

Remember - we want recent obs. of all sorts either brought or sent in directly to the S. L.