

MISS TITCOMB, LIBRARY HEAD, DIES AT HOME

Librarian And Originator Of Book Wagon Expires After Long Illness

Miss Mary Lemist Titcomb, librarian of the Washington County Free Library and originator of the first traveling library in the country, died at her home, 326 Summit Avenue, last night about 7:30 o'clock following a long illness. Miss Titcomb had been confined to her home since early in January.

The upbuilding of the local library to a plane where it received national recognition was due entirely to the efforts of Miss Titcomb. The institution from a small beginning was developed under the policies of Miss Titcomb until its dominant influence extended far and wide.

Miss Titcomb was born in Farmington, New Hampshire, the daughter of George Alfred and Mary Lancaster Titcomb. She was educated at Robinson Female Seminary, Exeter, N. H. She served as apprentice in the Concord (Mass.) Public Library; librarian at the Rutland (Vermont) Public Library. She was secretary of the first Vermont Library Commission and served as Library organizer in Vermont from 1899 to 1901. She came to Hagerstown to accept the post of Librarian at the Washington County Free Library on February 2, 1901.

Soon after entering upon her duties, Miss Titcomb started devising ways and means to bind the city and county together with bonds of good books. To make the Library accessible to the entire county, deposit stations were established in all sections. Then followed the establishment of the book wagon or traveling library. This bookcase on wheels was sent to the remote sections of the county finding the isolated farm that wanted books but was not in easy reach of the central or deposit stations. The library wagon, the first ever established, brought nation-wide fame to the local institution.

Throughout the 31 years she served as Librarian Miss Titcomb was ever planning ahead and devising methods to improve the service and influence of the institution she had developed to great heights. One of the valuable features of the Library developed by Miss Titcomb is the juvenile department where children are supplied with the best books. An important work developed by the Librarian was the linking of the Library with the schools. It was through this steady development and progress, that Hagerstown gained a nation-wide reputation as a mecca for book lovers. The accomplishments and the creations of Miss Titcomb in the Library field were heralded far and wide. The work that has been accomplished is incalculable.

In 1908, because of the splendid work at the local library, a gift of \$25,000 was made by Andrew Carnegie for the purchase of books and equipment.

On the occasion of her twenty-fifth anniversary as Librarian, Miss Titcomb was tendered a reception and a beautiful silver pitcher was presented as a token of appreciation of the splendid work she had done.

Miss Titcomb was secretary and treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the Library; secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts; member of the Women's Club, American Library Association; chairman of the Regional Training Class of the American Library Association; member of the Garden Club, of Hagerstown; Federation of Women's Clubs; honorary member of the Current Events Club; member of the Homemakers Club of Halfway; member of Historical Society of Washington County; Maryland Library Association and Columbia Library Association.

Miss Titcomb organized the library training class which became an efficient outlet for young women from various sections to prepare for library work and it has proved a valuable auxiliary to the institution.

She won, among many and various honors, mention in "Who's Who in the East" in which she is listed in recognition of her outstanding ability and work.

Despite her pressing duties as Librarian, Miss Titcomb found time to devote to community activities and was active in many civic movements.

She is survived by one sister, Mrs. Lilla Howell, Concord, Mass.; brother, Edward Titcomb, Los Angeles, California; nieces, Mrs. John Urquhart Manchester, N. H.; Mrs. William Moffatt, River Edge, N. J.; Miss Elizabeth Titcomb, Hartford, Conn.; nephews John Titcomb, Seattle, Wash., and John and Rodman Titcomb, Concord, Mass.

Funeral services will be held Wednesday afternoon at 5 o'clock at St. John's Episcopal Church by the rector, the Rev. Walter Byron Stehl, D. D. Interment in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord, Mass.