

*American Association of
University Women*

Roanoke Branch
1923-1977

FOREWORD

In compiling this history of Roanoke Branch, American Association of University Women, I used such Branch records as were available and consulted members familiar with Branch activities.

Anna Louise Haley.

Roanoke, Virginia
December, 1977

In May, 1923, a group of women met at the YWCA club rooms and organized the Roanoke Branch of the American Association of University Women. Miss M. Belle Jeffery presided and Miss Pattie N. Ellis acted as temporary secretary. Reports were made by the Nominating Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Committee on Constitution and By Laws. All were duly accepted.

Elected to office were: Mrs. Herman F. Larson, president; Mrs. T. Duncan Hobart, vice president; Miss Emily Barksdale, secretary; and Mrs. B. A. Williams, treasurer.

Mrs. E. P. Tompkins (membership chairman) reported that 17 women had signed Association cards, 10 women had promised to join but had not yet filled out membership applications, and 9 women wanted to join in the fall. Charter membership was to be kept open until October 1, 1923.

Six women were present at the October 9 meeting. Miss Hilda Gleaves was elected vice president and Mrs. H. Spencer Edmunds, secretary. This seems to have been in place of rather than in addition to the officers elected in May. However, Miss M. Belle Jeffery continued to sign the minutes through May, 1926. She was officially elected secretary in 1924. The president read a letter from national headquarters giving news of the national convention and regretting that fees were not forwarded in time for recognition of Roanoke Branch at the Portland Convention.

By October 10, 1923, dues had been forwarded to headquarters so that Roanoke Branch could be officially recognized. The charter members listed were Miss Amo E. Bloxton, Mrs. H. F. Larson, Miss Emily Barksdale, Miss Minna C. Wilkins, Mrs. B. A. Williams, Miss Pattie N. Ellis, Mrs. Holman Willis, Mrs. Luther B. Cabaniss, Miss Dorothy F. Lacy, Miss Hilda Gleaves, Mrs. E. P. Tompkins, and Miss M. Belle Jeffery. In November, Dr. Mary Williamson, Dr. E. Marion Smith, and Miss Lela A. Page were elected to membership.

In its formative years, Roanoke Branch relied heavily on Hollins College: for members, for programs for study group direction, and for leadership generally. Three of the first five presidents were from the Hollins faculty: Dr. Mary Williamson, Dr. E. Marion Smith, and Dr. Rachel Wilson. Later came Miss Ida Sitler and Dr. Janet MacDonald. Dr. Smith and Dr. MacDonald subsequently served terms as State presidents.

Fewer than a dozen members attended meetings the first year. During the next two years, attendance fluctuated between 14 and 40. Local dues were \$1.00 and national dues \$ 2. 00. The 1927-28 budget was based on 40 members with dues at \$5.00. During the Depression dues were reduced to \$ 3.50 but were raised again, in 1943, to \$5.00. They gradually moved up to the \$ 16. 00 fee in 1977.

In January, 1936, there were 58 members. In 1940, Roanoke Branch was the largest in the State with 104 members, but in 1946 there were only 84. Membership fluctuated constantly during the war years as service personnel moved and war work drew members away. Membership was 163 in 1953 and 199 in 1957. The 1977 membership is 158.

The YWCA and the Meringen Tea Room were the sites of early board meetings. (The Meringen served lunch for 50¢ plus a 5¢ tip!) Most of the membership meetings were at the "Y" until 1934. Others were at the homes of members, at the Patrick Henry Hotel, at Hollins College, or at Hotel Roanoke. In May, 1937, Miss Ida Sitler (Branch president) initiated the custom of inviting the Branch to hold one

meeting each year at Hollins. From 1939, Hollins seniors were also invited to attend this meeting, held either in April or May. The AAUW organization was explained and one senior was given a national membership. In 1975, Roanoke College seniors were included in the invitation.

In 1936, on recommendation of the Executive Board, Hotel Roanoke was selected as the regular meeting place of the membership. While the hotel was being renovated in 1937-38, meetings were shifted to the Woman's Club House on Patterson Avenue but reverted to Hotel Roanoke. During World War II, there was considerable difficulty in securing meeting places. Hotels were unable to give the usual service. During 1943-44, Thurman and Boone Furniture Company made their assembly room available. In the late fifties and sixties, changing meeting places from month to month was vigorously protested by some members, but to no avail.

Until December, 1933, all meetings (except for banquets honoring individuals) were daytime. In November, 1933, the membership voted to alternate between daytime and evening. The first night meeting was held in the breakfast room of the Patrick Henry Hotel at 7:30 P. M. on December 20, 1933. Daytime meetings still predominated, however, for several years.

Money raising has been a minor concern and most schemes have been related to other activities, social or cultural. A musical tea in 1925 brought in over \$100. (The "Society Page" of the daily paper carried the names of all those who attended.) In February, 1927, a card party netted \$140. In 1929, and again in 1931, the Lynchburg Little Theatre Players were sponsored in collaboration with the R-MWC Alumnae. Other sources of income were art exhibits, public forums, plays, and sales of cookbooks, stationery, mats, playing cards, tooth brushes and Indian scarves; and, since 1960, used books. The 1977 used book sale grossed \$767. Some of the receipts, notably those of the used book sale, have been earmarked for Fellowship.

Many of the early meetings were centered on becoming acquainted with AAUW organization and objectives, but the interests that have been paramount surfaced early. Education was of prime importance. At the organization meeting May 23, 1923, working with high school girls to encourage them to go on to college was suggested as a possible field of service. The first of many "College Days" for high school seniors was presented April 29, 1925. Attendance at Virginia colleges accredited by the AAUW was stressed.

Only four Virginia colleges were on the accredited list in 1923: Randolph-Macon, Westhampton, Sweet Briar, and William and Mary. In July, 1923, Mrs. B. A. Williams (Branch treasurer) requested information about getting Hollins College on the accredited list. This was accomplished in 1933. A 1932 petition from the Branch may have speeded the decision.

Organization of a Junior Group of the Branch was considered as early as 1930 but did not become effective until 1936 when 14 recent graduates began meeting as a separate committee.

One of the outcomes of the Depression of the thirties was a widespread interest in consumer problems and broader social and economic issues.

As a result, the Social Studies Committee was established in 1936. Dr. Janet MacDonald, a national chairman of the Social Studies Committee, was an active participant in Branch study group discussions of local, state, and federal legislation, and its study of individual liberties.

In 1944, the Branch coordinated its activities with National by dividing the membership into the seven national committees. When a new structure was adopted by National in 1963-64, Roanoke Branch set up the present division into four areas.

Roanoke Branch has studied, presented programs, and solicited local support primarily in four areas: education, international relations, community interests and cultural affairs. Education has been the primary focus. Branch interests have ranged from preschool education through the maintenance of high standards of liberal education in colleges and universities.

FELLOWSHIPS

Of major importance in higher education is the fellowship program. This program is, so far as can be discovered, the oldest program of awards for advanced scholarly work in this country, aside from fellowships administered by colleges and universities. From its beginning until the present, the Association has made awards to over 2, 000 women of the United States and foreign countries.

Two Roanoke Branch members have been recipients of fellowships: in 1944, a fellowship in English was awarded to Mrs. Louise Forrest Taylor, an alumna of Jefferson High in Roanoke; and, in 1964, to Mrs. Mondia Dyer, an alumna of Wm. Byrd in Vinton. (Mrs. Dyer was one of 64 southern women who received a fellowship that year under the AAIW College Faculty Program.)

In 1927-28, Roanoke Branch budgeted \$ 20 for fellowship. In 1969, \$750 was earmarked as a memorial to Dr. Janet MacDonald, former Branch and State president. Since 1950, the average contribution has been \$500, which enables the Branch to name the grant for an outstanding member. The first was named for Hollins president Dr. Bessie Carter Randolph.

The fellowship cause has been strengthened over the years by the capable women who have served as chairmen of the Fellowship Committee. Two of them served also as State chairmen: Mrs. W. S. Garrett and Miss Nell Walters.

In accepting the \$500 Randolph grant, Dr. Meta Glass (National chairman of Fellowship) spoke of the AAIW as a fellowship of scholars who give regularly so women who can and wish to, may do professional and creative work. The grants help individuals and have also helped international relations. An editorial on the Randolph Fellowship in a Roanoke paper, noted:

"There is no more promising field than encouragement of study in this country by young men and women of other nations. It is the best method we have of spreading knowledge of the American way of life and the meaning of real democracy."

Dr. Salard Junghavat, a surgeon from Thailand, used the Randolph Fellowship to study anaesthesiology at George Washington University. When she came to Roanoke to speak to the Roanoke Branch, the Academy of Medicine was invited to hear her.

EDUCATION

From its founding, the National Association concerned itself with education; not only higher education for women but education at all levels. Through research, discussion, publications, support for legislation, and other action, AACW has used its influence to raise educational standards and to widen opportunities.

Roanoke Branch members have been deeply involved - as parents, as teachers, as members of the Roanoke Community Council on Education, and in leadership capacities. Dr. Mary Phlegar Smith and Mrs. R. E. Paine have been State Education Chairmen, Mrs. E. C. Moomaw was a Roanoke City School Board member, and Miss Dorothy Gibboney was Superintendent of Roanoke City Public Schools.

The preschool child was an early concern of the Roanoke Branch, and this concern became stronger as study continued. In the fifties, workshops and study groups resulted in the publication, in 1954, of a survey by Roanoke Branch members of preschool education in Roanoke - UNTIL WE ARE SIX. Consultations with the Superintendent of Roanoke City Public Schools and the Roanoke City School Board helped bring about the establishment of a kindergarten program in the city schools in 1967.

In 1925, and between 1936 and 1952, Roanoke Branch sponsored "College Days" to encourage high school girls to go to college. Programs and displays of materials were handled by the Recent Graduates group and the Education Committee.

Decisions made and action taken at meetings, in workshops, and in study groups were varied. In 1927, the Branch agreed to examine local high school courses, especially as to their adequacy as prerequisites to college courses,

In 1928, questionnaires were mailed on the subject of establishing a coordinate college at Harrisonburg State Teachers Normal School.

In 1929, the Branch endorsed a liberal arts college in coordination with the University of Virginia

In 1931, the Education Committee conducted an institute on child psychology, using authorities from college and community. That same year they worked with local stores to promote THE RIGHT TOY FOR THE RIGHT AGE.

In 1932, a program on vocational guidance was presented by teachers from Jefferson High and from Goucher College. In 1939, support for a guidance program was again requested.

Also in 1932, a motion was adopted that the Education Committee look into the situation of the school board.

In 1938-39, the Education Committee studied restoration of the eighth grade, discontinued in 1934 as an economy measure,

In 1939, a study group devoted ten meetings to THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD.

In April, 1949, the KNOW YOUR SCHOOL group reported ten interviews with the superintendent, four with the business manager, four with school board members, and at least one each with each principal.

In 1941, the Social Studies Committee reported letters and forms had been sent to doctors, dentists, and interested taxpayers as part of a survey to improve health conditions in Roanoke schools. The Branch later sponsored Dr. C. B. Ransome's proposed school health budget calling for a school doctor, an additional nurse, a school dentist, and a dentist's helper, together with the requisite equipment.

At the Division convention in 1943, Dr. Charles Smith (President of Roanoke College) deplored the neglect of the fundamentals; an AAUW speaker charged the schools trained students for a new social order; and the convention voted for federal aid to education.

Speaking to the Branch in 1951, Dr. Gilbert Rich (Director of Roanoke Guidance Clinic) urged special classes for maladjusted children. He also stressed the need for a competent school psychologist.

Concerned with the teacher shortage and the need for recruiting more, Roanoke Branch in the early fifties sponsored an essay contest in the local high school on WHY I'D LIKE TO TEACH.

In October, 1935, a Branch committee was set up to look into the prospects of AAUW activity in the world of radio. Radio programs for children preceded each performance of the CLARE TREE MAJOR plays which began in 1938. Branch members used the radio from time to time to publicize Branch activity, so radio plays and musical programs for elementary schools seemed a logical step. In 1948, the Branch introduced the GROWING TO GREATNESS series, a group of radio plays presented weekly over Radio Station WDBJ for pupils in grades 4, 5 and 6.

MAGIC IN MUSICLAND (November 8, 1948 to April 7, 1949) added special programs giving 15 pupils the opportunity to play for the radio audience selections they had heard on the program. The series concluded with a music memory contest that attracted 1,500 entries. Twelve city and eight county schools used the program.

TREASURE TRAILS IN ART, presented in cooperation with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the University of Virginia, and the State Board of Education, consisted of ten programs presented each Thursday between October 6 and December 15, 1949. Printed schedules were provided for each city pupil in grades 4, 5 and 6.

Scripts for GROWING TO GREATNESS (the boyhoods of eight Virginia presidents) were written by the Creative Writing Committee and produced by the Radio Committee. Pupils were cast in appropriate roles. The plays were aired between February 9 and March 30, 1950. Printed programs were distributed to the schools.

Twelve programs on GROWING TO GREATNESS THROUGH ART were presented between October 4 and December 20, 1950, in cooperation with the National Gallery of Art.

Four programs on GROWING TO GREATNESS THROUGH MUSIC were presented in January, 1951. A Branch member provided the necessary piano accompaniment.

GROWING TO GREATNESS IN VIRGINIA, a series of twelve radio scripts on historic places and events in Virginia, was written and produced by Branch members between February 7 and April 25, 1951. Again, students were cast in appropriate role

Beginning in October, 1951, the programs on Virginia presidents were repeated, to be followed in the spring by six programs on music and a series on art.

Radio Station WDBJ found the programs so popular that a continuation was requested, and from February 4 through May 6, 1953, GROWING TO GREATNESS IN VIRGINIA (PLACES AND EVENTS) was repeated. This was presented again from November, 1953 until April, 1954. Music and art programs were presented in the fall of 1953.

In 1954, a Branch committee was appointed to study television. Evaluation of programs, especially those listed for children, was the first activity. This was a cooperative venture with division and national affiliates. A study of newspaper coverage of international news followed.

From 1958-1963, all the media were under consideration. From 1963 until 1970, the emphasis was on educational television. The January, 1963, meeting was open so that interested parties could hear presentations by state and local ETV chairmen. By 1964, ETV was a reality in the Valley. Branch members felt a longer period should have been allowed for consideration of the many problems involved. This view was aired at the March, 1965, meeting when the program was devoted to a review of Roanoke's first year of ETV.

During 1969, a Branch committee attempted to get foreign language programs and films on ETV. Letters were sent to interested citizens, area superintendents, and school boards; superintendents were visited as well, and open meetings were called. None of the effort proved effective.

Despite other disappointments, Roanoke Branch has seen implementation of several of its concerns: art teachers in elementary schools, a foreign language supervisor for the high schools, abolition of tuition grants supporting segregation, special classes for the maladjusted, and a full time school psychology

AAUW interest in the media is not new. In November, 1938, the association endorsed the Neely Pettingill bill prohibiting block booking and blind selling in the motion picture industry. Formation of the Mass Media Committee in 1958 emphasized the interest in the media.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Following the deeper interest in international affairs that came with World War I, a study-action program was developed nationally through which members have informed themselves on international issues and helped to build intelligent public opinion on world affairs.

The primary aims of the International Relations Committee are to widen horizons and to promote international peace. A 1925 program dealt with "Forces that go into the making of a new India"; followed, in 1926, by "Impressions of Geneva with Some Gossip of the Amsterdam Conference" and, in 1927, by "The British Imperial Conference" and "The Problem of the Debt".

In 1929, a group was organized to study international relations from the viewpoint of the nation under discussion. A member's husband (Rabbi Fred Rypins) was the leader.

In January, 1932, a dinner meeting at Hotel Roanoke honored Dr. Susan Lough, a Division officer from the Westhampton faculty, who spoke on "The League of Nations and the Twelfth Disarmament Conference."

In December, 1936, the Branch held an open meeting to hear Miss Jeanette Rankin, Executive Secretary for the National Council for the Prevention of War. (In 1916, Miss Rankin cast the only vote against U.S. entry into World War I.)

In February, 1938, a public dinner was held jointly with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to hear Senator Gerald P. Nye on "Preparedness for Peace." Three decades later, in September, 1970, a Branch member presented on a local radio station a five-part program on "Peace," using AAUW JOURNAL material and interviewing AAUW members.

In 1942-43, the International Relations and the Legislative Committees of Roanoke Branch cooperated with the Public Affairs Committee of the YWCA for monthly discussion groups, open to the public, on current world affairs. Dr. Janet MacDonald led the group, and a group the following year, in a study of comparative governments.

During her tenure as State president, Dr. MacDonald and her Special Projects chairman (Mrs. Beverly Day Williamson of Roanoke Branch) planned and promoted the OUR TOWN SCRAPBOOKS. The scrapbooks showed through photographs and explanatory text the human elements in American life. They were sent through the U.S. State Department to schools in foreign countries in the hope they would help to counteract the inaccurate picture presented by hostile propaganda. Roanoke Branch prepared ten booklets: two in Spanish, one in French, one in Japanese, and four in English.

From 1952 until 1961, the Branch cooperated with the Woodrow Wilson School of Foreign Affairs of the University of Virginia in bringing to Roanoke four forums annually on international relations. These were presented by internationally known speakers at the Roanoke City Public Library until 1959, when larger quarters were needed and they were moved to the auditorium of the First National Exchange Bank.

Roanoke Branch participated in an experiment in international living initiated in 1967. It continues but without AAUW participation.

Study groups in international relations have had varying success during the last two decades. During the sixties, China study groups were very active. Guidelines from national headquarters have been followed but availability of authorities in the field determined the nature of the studies.

Resolutions have been utilized over the years to demonstrate Branch interest in various local, national, and international activities from a 1923 telegram to President Coolidge endorsing U.S. participation in the World Court, to a 1975 resolution to Roanoke City Council suggesting an alternative to a landfill disposal of waste. (This was supported by a personal appearance before council.) A 1941 resolution concerned the basics, school guidance, and school health while a 1974 resolution urged that a regional science museum be established and -suggested Roanoke as the site.

A letter to Warren Austin, our ambassador to the U.N. in 1950, contained a resolution endorsing support of the U.N. in the Korean crisis. Following World War II, intensive study was given to the U.N. under the direction of Mrs. E. Boyd Tyrell.

In the fall of 1936, Roanoke Branch aided financially the Child Welfare Association in bringing Dr. Gesell's film LIFE BEGINS to a local theatre. The following year THE HUMAN ADVENTURE, a film on the archaeological work of the late Henry Breasted was presented at Jefferson High and at Hollins.

Between 1938 and 1940, the Branch provided a scholarship for the Recreational Institute, formed a team to work with the Community Chest, and set up a study of child welfare with the Family and Child Welfare Division of the Roanoke Community Council.

During World War II, AACW members manned war bond booths, aided in WAC recruiting, cancelled the February, 1943, meeting to register applicants for War Rationing Book No. 2, formed a knitting unit for British War Relief, served on the Red Cross Cam and Hospital Board, registered with the Women's Division of Civil Defense, bought bonds, sold tickets to a play produced by the boys from Camp Pickett, and joined conservation efforts to save gas, fats, tin, paper, and other scarce items.

In 1945, the National Biennial and the Virginia Conventions were cancelled to comply with the government ban on nonessential assemblies which would tax transportation and hotel facilities. Instead each branch was asked to have a "meeting of minds, not of persons" -- inspirational programs on the theme "The University Woman's Responsibility in This Time of Crisis."

Members filled Christmas baskets for the sick soldiers at Camp Pickett; formed a group to study post-war housing; and listened to talks on the OPA, Poland, Our Role in Defense, and numerous other topics related to the war, our allies, the United Nations, and the expected peace.

In 1952, letters were sent to members of the General Assembly strongly supporting the appropriation of \$2.50 a day for the care of patients in mental hospitals. Roanoke Branch was then active in the newly organized Mental Health Association.

Combined study by the Social and Economic Issues Committee and the Legislative Committee resulted in the February, 1962, publication of a booklet - ROANOKE CARES FOR ITS SENIOR CITIZENS - a listing of services available, prepared in cooperation with the United Fund of Roanoke Valley.

In 1964, a museum study group was organized. In July, 1966, the museum chairman called a meeting of people interested in establishing a museum in Roanoke. Thirty-three persons representing sixteen organizations attended. When a science museum became a reality in 1970, its first president was Dorothy Gibboney, Branch museum chairman that year.

As a follow-up of the workshop topic "The Role of Education in the Struggle against Poverty," the Branch meeting in January, 1965, was opened to the public that they might hear members of community organizations discuss "Poverty in Our Midst." Speakers were from the League of Women Voters, the City Planning Department, the Council of Community Services, and the Roanoke Chamber of Commerce.

Local professional youth workers were invited to the February, 1966, meeting to hear a judge of the Augusta Juvenile Court discuss "Justice and the Juvenile." This was part of the study program LAW

AND THE CITIZEN. In October, members attended Judge Hoback's court which was hearing tuition questions. Later in the month, the film TRIAL BY JURY was shown in the evening at Patrick Henry High School and in February, 1967, Dr. Barbara Zeldin spoke on "Freedom and the Law" at Hollins College.

In April, 1970, Roanoke Branch presented a panel of business people and members of the urban community to discuss "The Human Use of Urban Space." This was part of the study of THIS BELEAGUERED EARTH. Meetings were held weekly, for six weeks, using films, book reviews, speakers from air pollution offices, and visits to air pollution offices, in cooperation with other groups established during National Clean Air Week. In November, 1970 the study group on "The Human Use of Urban Space" met in City Council chambers with the City Planning Commission. All interested persons were invited.

Between 1958-76, Branch member Elisabeth Drewry was on the Roanoke City Library Board. Roanoke Branch initiated two important movements: the GREAT BOOKS program and regionalization of the Valley libraries. Branch president (Mrs. J. E. Stockman) appointed Mrs. Drewry to represent Roanoke Branch in formulating plans for a GREAT BOOKS group. In October, 1958, there was an organizational meeting at the library with Roanoke Branch and the library as co-sponsors. In February, 1959, there was a training session for leaders. Within the year, more than 75 Roanokers, in three discussion groups, were meeting every two weeks to discuss a cross section of the world's great literature. By 1961 there were five GREAT BOOKS groups with first, second, third, and fourth year continuing- to meet. Several groups are still active. In 1961, a Branch member (Mrs. H. P. Kyle) introduced the JUNIOR GREAT BOOKS program at local parochial schools and this program continued for several years.

Between 1962 and 1964, Roanoke Branch studied the possibility of a regional library in the Valley. Study sessions, letters, public meetings, and newspaper articles were used to explore the possibility. Although vigorously opposed at the time by various councilmen and supervisors, the issue is not yet dead. Some regionalization has been effected by the Roanoke City Public Library and Craig County, and Roanoke City and Roanoke County interchange book loans. In August, 1977, a restudy of regionalization was begun.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Branch activity has been most diversified and longer sustained in the field of the arts than in any other area. Music *' drama, creative writing, literature, and the visual arts have been studied, sponsored, supported, encouraged, and presented for public enjoyment.

From 1938 until 1943, Roanoke Branch was represented on the board of the Community Concert Association.

Music programs to encourage local artists, as well as for information and pleasure, have been a part of Branch activity since 1923. Whenever possible, vocal and instrumental groups from the schools have been invited to present programs at Branch meetings. The December meetings have traditionally been devoted to the arts, usually to music; on occasion, music and painting have been combined. From 1946 to 1952, piano recitals were enjoyed, often against the background of the Madonna exhibits at Hotel Roanoke. An organ recital in the chapel was the highlight of Hollins hospitality between 1968 and 1975.

In April, 1924, Roanoke Branch was invited to participate in the program for Music Week. Some of the early Branch music programs included *MUSICAL ARCHITECTURE*, *THE CORRELATION OF MUSIC AND DRAMA*, *NEW TRENDS IN MUSIC EDUCATION*, as well as vocal and instrumental programs. The first president, nationally known in music circles, provided several of the vocal programs.

Between 1948 and 1954, Roanoke Branch presented a series of weekly radio programs for school children - *THE MAGIC OF MUSICLAND* and *UP AND DOWN THE SCALES* - the last four programs dealing with the boyhoods of Beethoven, Strauss, Schubert, and Stephen Foster. These were basically a part of the *GROWING TO GREATNESS* series.

In April, 1959, a folk opera, "Sourwood Mountain, 11 produced by the University of Mississippi Department of Music and Dance, was presented at Jefferson High School.

DRAMA

Drama, especially for children, has been a continuing concern of Roanoke Branch. Interest in the Little Theatre movement dates from 1925, when a speaker from Lynchburg reviewed what had been done in Lynchburg and elsewhere. Roanoke Branch and the R-MWC Alumnae brought the Lynchburg Little Theatre group to Roanoke for performances in 1929 and again in 1931.

In 1931, the Branch president appointed two members to serve on a committee of development for the Roanoke Little Theatre. It presented *THE PATSY* on April 15, proceeds going to local emergency relief. *BEYOND THE HORIZON* was the second offering.

Roanoke Branch provided legitimate theatre for children by bringing the *CLARE TREE MAJOR* professional players to Roanoke, for one to four plays yearly, beginning in 1937. In 1938, over 1, 600 tickets were provided for indigent city and county children. Performances were given at Hollins College and in the high school auditorium.

Transportation difficulties limited performances to one play during the sixth season, 1942. Sponsorship was dropped in 1944 but resumed in 1948-49. Presentation of two plays at Hollins brought legitimate theatre for the first time to 2, 000 county children. The 1949-50 presentation concluded Branch sponsorship.

During the same period, the Branch cooperated with and had membership in the Community Children's Theatre. This group was part of the Roanoke Civic Theatre project begun in 1942. A Branch member has served on the board of the Children's Theatre since 1966.

Roanoke Branch took great pride in introducing Barter Theatre to Roanoke Valley by co-sponsoring Barter plays jointly with the Roanoke Jaycees from 1947 until 1955. Four plays were presented annually. *MY THREE ANGELS* closed the 1955 season.

Creativity in all fields, especially in literature, has been recognized and promoted. Creative writing sessions, some open to the public, have been held intermittently since 1941. Branch members participated in creative writing workshops in 1950 to provide radio scripts for the *GROWING TO GREATNESS* series on the boyhoods of Virginia boys who became presidents. In 1952-53, Branch members wrote and produced 14 additional scripts for the *GROWING TO GREATNESS* series.

When Mrs. Robert Mason was Division chairman of the Creative Writing Committee she arranged the AAUW Creative Writers' Day at the Virginia Highlands Festival.

Since the mid-sixties, a conference for area writers has been sponsored by Roanoke Branch on a Sunday in Library Week. Well-known writers have been invited to read from or to speak about their work or the work of other writers. Lack of attendance by the writers of the area has been a disappointment to the Branch.

In January, 1967, Roanoke Branch joined with the Junior League, the Roanoke Fine Arts Center, and the Roanoke Symphony Society in a coordinated series of events aimed at the enrichment of the children, youth, and adults of Roanoke Valley.

Roanoke Branch has been a pioneer in promoting appreciation of the visual arts in the Valley. Branch President Natalie Roberts (now Mrs. Walter Foster) initiated Art Week in 1935. This week opened with an exhibition at Hotel Roanoke of 25 paintings by contemporary artists, a loan from the Grand Central Galleries of New York City. Lectures at the opening and closing of the exhibit were given by E. S. Peck of the art faculty at Hollins College.

In 1936, the loan came from the Boston Guild of Artists. Local artists were featured in conjunction with the show and prizes were awarded. The 1937 loan was from the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. The judges for the local show included Dr. John Cannaday of Hollins who also gave one of the gallery talks. Dr. Cannaday has won nationwide recognition as author and critic. His film, ART: WHAT IS IT?, was shown as part of the AAUW exhibit in 1970.

In 1940, 1941, and 1942 the exhibits were hung at the Elks Club.

Beginning in 1940-41, the Branch conducted drawing contests for school children in connection with the CLARE TREE MAJOR plays. These drawings were exhibited, along with the loan exhibit and the local exhibit, in the annual show of 1942. Gallery talks, especially for children, were given on Children's Art Day.

Art Chairman Mary Parmenter's 1942 report included this statement:

"We hope that eventually art may be included in the public school curriculum and that some day Roanoke will have its own museum and active art center. "

Miss Parmenter also recommended that we do more with children and give up the exhibition for the time being.

This was done. During the war years, Branch emphasis was on fostering an interest in art within the community: arranging a university extension course on art, sponsoring student exhibits, and working for the appointment of an art supervisor for the schools.

Roanoke Branch became a member of the Roanoke Arts Alliance in 1940. Art Chairman Mary Lewis Mayhew had been active in its formation. Branch membership in the Virginia Arts Alliance and the Virginia Museum dates from 1942.

In the summer of 1947, Art Chairman Mary DeLong named a committee of three to select 30 patrons from the community to sponsor a showing from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The necessary committees were set up and from January 4 through January 11, 1948, about 25 exhibits from the permanent collection of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts were on display at Hotel Roanoke. Miss DeLong reported:

"Our Branch is pleased to initiate this movement, an experiment on the part of the Museum, and then to see it taken over as a community project. Roanoke Branch is using its influence in the hope of seeing an arts auditorium included in the proposed new library for the city."

During the Christmas season from 1948 until 1953, Roanoke Branch exhibited famous European Madonna paintings and prints at Hotel Roanoke or at Lee Junior High School in Downtown Roanoke. Speakers were provided during the exhibits and gallery notes, written by Branch member Miss Frances Niederer of the Hollins Art Department, were distributed to the elementary schools.

In 1948, Mrs. Arthur Ellett (Roanoke Branch's representative to the Virginia Arts Alliance) was elected to its board of trustees and, in 1950, was elected president of the Alliance.

In May, 1950, Roanoke Branch co-sponsored with the Junior League of Roanoke an exhibition of the Faberge" Jewel Collection from the Virginia Museum, the first time it had left the Museum. Faberge" was the subject of one of the TREASURE TRAIL programs aired for school children in 1949.

In February-March, 1953\$ Roanoke Branch and Hollins Art Department co-sponsored with the Roanoke Fine Arts Center their first juried exhibit for area artists. Roanoke Branch continued its sponsorship with the Fine Arts Center in 1954, 1955, 1956, and 19 7. During these years, Roanoke Branch continued its unjuried exhibits at Heironimus which has been the site of exhibits since Art Chairman Mrs. J. Meade Harris arranged the first one there in 1951.

Until the FESTIVAL IN THE PARK began, the Heironimus show was the only completely open show available to artists in Roanoke and the vicinity. It has given hundreds of artists exposure, assistance, and encouragement.

In 1954 and 1955, Roanoke Branch provided an art scholarship for a black artist whose work in the 1954 exhibit had been highly praised by the judges.

Student scholarships named for Art Chairman Mary Nininger were given promising young artists between 1957 and 1967. The difficulty of arranging classes at the Fine Arts Center for out-of-town winners resulted in the substitution of a monetary prize instead of the scholarship.

Besides providing a show place for artists, the annual exhibits have been the focus for gallery talks each year, for art films, and for demonstrations of various techniques.

ART AND CITY was the theme of the 1971 exhibit. Walking tours of Downtown Roanoke, films, and a lecture on city planning accompanied this exhibit.

From the first meeting in February, 1975, of the committee working for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Roanoke Branch has been represented. The grant, providing funds to be used for a focus on the arts in Roanoke Valley, was obtained and late in 1975, the Roanoke Valley Arts Council was organized.

CONCLUSION

Branch President Mrs. K. Mark Cowen's report, 1940-41, reads:

"From statements made by citizens and tabulated as heard, the community regards the Branch as an outstanding educational group. They look to the AAUW for stimulation, advice, and assistance in building programs, forums, and study groups, particularly along the lines of education, international relations welfare services in schools. and art."

In retrospect, Mrs. Cowen's report is a challenge to us today.

Roanoke Branch can justly be proud of its contribution to the cultural life of the city. The Clare Tree Major and the Barter Theatre groups enriched the lives of hundreds of children and adults.

The art exhibits presented from 1935 until the present were a major factor in the establishment of

The publication of UNTIL WE ARE SIX alerted the public to the need for adequate educational opportunities for the Preschool child.

ROANOKE CARES FOR ITS SENIOR CITIZENS was a forerunner of the Directory of Community Services now published by the Roanoke Valley Council of Community Services.

The GROWING TO GREATNESS radio series enriched school programs at a time when the needed money and motivation were not available elsewhere.

As other organizations and the media have offered the stimulation and the information Roanoke Branch formerly provided, the impact of AAUW has lessened. Its influence has been dissipated, but not lost.

As long as the need for improvement in civic affairs, in human relations, and in personal growth exists, there still will be a need for the concerted effort of educated women to meet the challenge.

FELLOWSHIPS NAMED GIFTS

1950 Dr. Bessie Randolph
1954 Roanoke Virginia International Grant
1955 Harriet Fillinger
1956 Dr. E. Marion Smith
1957 Nell Walters
1958 Dr. Janet MacDonald
1959 Dr. Rachel Wilson
1960 Roanoke Branch
1962 Harriet Lou Simpson
1966 Mary DeLong
1967 Dorothy Gibboney
1968 Anna Louise Haley
1969 Dr. Janet MacDonald
1970 Harriet Lou Simpson
1971 Gertrude Camper
1972 Ann Kyle
1973 Elizabeth Drewry
1974 Bernice Sixbey
1976 Roxie Phlegar
1977 Dolores Skelly

PAST PRESIDENTS

1923 Mrs. Herman F. Larson
1924 Dr. Mary Williamson
1926 Dr. E. Marion Smith
1928 Mrs. Holman Willis, Sr.
1930 Dr. Rachel Wilson
1931 Mrs. W. S. Garrett
1934 Mrs. Walter Foster
1936 Miss Ida Sitler
1938 Miss Mary DeLong
1940 Mrs. K. Mark Cowan
1942 Mrs. C. R. Thaxton
1944 Mrs. Charles Logan
1944 Dr. Janet L. MacDonald
1946 Mrs. Arthur T. Ellett
1948 Mrs. Beverly Day Williamson
1950 Mrs. Abram Hash
1952 Mrs. A. B. Camper
1954 Mrs. Robert L. Little
1956 Mrs. J. E. Stockman
1958 Miss Anna Louise Haley
1960 Mrs. W. W. Kavanaugh
1961 Dr. Rachel Wilson
1964 Mrs. Harold Kyle
1966 Mrs. Carleton Drewry
1968 Dr. Patricia H. Gathercole
1970 Mrs. Travis McKenzie
1971 Mrs. B. Keith Haley
1972 Mrs. Dana Mayer
1973 Mrs. B. Keith Haley
1974)
1975) Mrs. H. Rice Mayes
1976)
1976 Mrs. Neil E. Hiatt