

Library Memories: Little Library, Bookmobile, Grand Opening of Patrick Henry Library

FL: Going to the Little Library. The students at Vienna Elementary, they would march down, usually on a Thursday, to the Little Library and get two books. Up to two books. I don't think they could get more. Then they'd keep those two books and return them the following time. I remember two little ladies ran the library. Wooden floors. I don't recall...I went in several times, but to be honest with you, at that time, I didn't go in to see the heating, how it was. But if you go into the Little Library, you can imagine how the lighting was. The lighting was horrible. Of course, you couldn't study. Now, you can go up to the County library and study. The students don't think that now. But you certainly couldn't study. You couldn't read. You were lucky to see the books on the shelf, looking at the titles. But the Little Library, taking tours—I'm sure, Mike, you've had that experience many times, seeing how bad that lighting is. You need to get some natural daylight.

One thing, I heard this later, one of the ladies that was a member of our group, long since gone, she was a librarian up at the County. She found out, and I never thought about it, because they had accepted integration at that time. You remember integration—I think it was 1964, the School Board. The Blacks were not allowed in the Library, in the Little Library. I think that put the pressure on the County to get us a library, to get a County library. We had the bookmobile, but the bookmobile only came once a week, on a Saturday. It was delivered on time, you had to be there. Allison's Bookmobile.

VH: What is a bookmobile?

FL: Oh, you don't know! That tells my age! Just about every town had a bookmobile. It was a miniature library. It was like a Greyhound Bus, wouldn't you say?

MC: (unclear) Everybody had a chance. It was the County's. A ton of books.

FL: I assume that you could probably order books at that time. Now, I don't know that for a fact, but it makes sense that you could order. Later, we had petitions and all. We needed a library. Everybody needed a library. Tysons and all were just getting started. We petitioned. We got the signatures, tried to get a library going, showing that we needed to support a library.

We got the new library, and, boy, that was a big event in town. I was there. They asked me to be there that Saturday to help the people and show them around. We had this one man. He was a real character. He used to come in, and he'd waltz in front of everybody else to get the daily newspaper. And, boy, that paper had better be there. He was really rough to get it. If somebody would steal the paper, which would happen occasionally, he'd say, 'Well, go buy one! Get one again!' We had a nickname for him: Paper Man. He would come in. The day we opened, a big event, ribbon cutting, they had a quartet from the school, a classical quartet with a violin, a

bass. Anyway, a nice event. They had wine, so many different kinds of wine. I was always afraid to take the wine on the cart because I was taking people around the ribbon cutting, real proud of it. So, anyway, I saw the Paper Man came in and he went right back. I thought, 'Boy, he'd better be happy with the new library.' So I went back to him. I said, 'Hey, how do you like our new library?' He said, 'About time you open it.'