

PENNSYLVANIA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL  
HUNTINGDON

August 10, 1935

Mr. John Chancellor  
The American Library Association  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Chancellor:

On the 16th of last month I completed one year at Huntingdon. I think you may be interested in knowing what we have accomplished.

You perhaps remember that Miss Dorothy Randolph was here for a few months last year and left about three months before I was appointed. She gave the library a good start but it was so run down that I still had to begin from practically the bottom. The books were ragged and a thousand of them in circulation were not catalogued. There was very little furniture. The charging system was old-fashioned and inadequate. Little had been done to help the boys. They never came to the library.

Soon after I took over my duties we made an inventory. The results were pretty discouraging but we managed to get all of the books properly recorded after three months of work. I was fortunate in getting an inmate who is very versatile and especially clever at designing furniture. We now have the necessary pieces, made in our carpenter shop, and many of them, I think, are unusual. The library room after a year is a pleasant place, well equipped and convenient. There is still much to be done but I am proud of its appearance as it now stands.

Mr. Mulhauser gave me invaluable help with the charging system. For almost a year we have used a plan based on his suggestions and it has worked out very well.

Since last September the library has been open four nights a week. All of the inmates may come and most of them do. We give each boy at least one hour a week. Boys who wish to study may stay several periods. The shelves are open. There have been no disciplinary problems and there are no guards in the room. We have been able to reach hundreds of boys through these evening hours.

It is necessary also to carry books to the wards. We hope this year to have boys coming to the library during the day. This is difficult to arrange because the inmates all work in the shops or go to school but there are two or three off hours which we could use and I am trying to have them scheduled to us. Our ward delivery system works well enough but at best it is a poor substitute for direct library contact. We use request slips which act also as the boys' receipts. Several of the features of this system, I believe, are original with us.



Mr. Miller of Gaylors Brothers came some time ago at our request and gave the boys a demonstration in book repairing. We now have a good repair shop and the collection looks many times better. We have placed bulletin boards all over the institution for posters and lists. Boys from our Sign Shop make the posters. Their work is quite professional and some of their ideas and designs are worth passing on.

You can see that this first year has been given necessarily to organization. We are ready now to enlarge our service. I am working on a program now which aims to seek out all of the boys who have completed our required eighth grade and encourage them to do some constructive reading. We can get them correspondence courses from the State Library in Harrisburg and other sources. The State Library will help us follow them up after they leave the institution. Many boys took advantage of these facilities last year. This year we hope to give everyone who wants to study the opportunity.

It has been a most interesting year and I have learned a lot, including some points in the art of diplomacy. Some of the guards had to be won over to the library idea. I cannot say that they all believe in it but I do know that we have the cooperation of most of them and a great many read our books and ask us to help them.

I shall appreciate hearing from you and I hope you will have some suggestions for us. I am pretty well isolated up here in the Pennsylvania hills and very seldom have the chance to talk things over with anyone in the field.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ F. J. Rowan