NOTES ON THE FIRST NEW MEXICO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION MEETING

The first “official” meeting of the New Mexico Library Association was held in Santa Fe on Friday, August 29, 1924. However, no minutes of that meeting seem to exist. Miss Wilma L. Shelton in her History of the New Mexico Library Association states that the date of the first meeting was August 24, 1924. Examination of the Santa Fe New Mexican for that period, though, reveals that the actual date was August 29. The meeting was held in connection with the Southwestern Library Association’s Third Biennial Meeting, held in Santa Fe for two days, August 28 and 29. In the newspaper reports, it is difficult to separate the activities of the two meetings.

The NMLA met in the St. Francis Auditorium at the Art Museum. Items on the agenda as reported by the Santa Fe New Mexican were:

1. Greetings from the President, Evelyn Shuler, Librarian, Raton Public Library, Raton, New Mexico.
5. Business meeting to effect a permanent organization and elect officers.

An additional item on the agenda: “Book Selection for the Community and School Library,” by Mary L. Holt, Librarian at New Mexico State Teachers’ College, is included in Miss Shelton’s History but was not reported in the paper.

The following states were in attendance at the meeting of the Southwestern Library Association: Arkansas, Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Mexico was also represented. The convention delegates were welcomed by “His Excellency Governor James F. Hinkle.” Each state gave a ten minute statement on library conditions and tendencies of the Southwest. It was reported that the Mexican statement was given in Spanish, with Jose Sena of Santa Fe as interpreter. The keynote speaker for the Southwestern convention was J. Frank Dobie.
Although one item on the agenda of the NMLA meeting was a “business meeting to effect a permanent organization and elect officers,” the result of the meeting was not reported. Miss Shelton in her History states that the NMLA was actually organized in December, 1923, and that Miss Evelyn Shuler was elected president, Miss Sue Goree, Secretary, and Mrs. N.F. Dixon, Treasurer. It is not known whether these people served until the second convention, which was held in Albuquerque on November 8, 1924.

The Santa Fe New Mexican commented on the convention in an editorial: “The schools teach children; the library teaches everyone; its curriculum is as wide as the sum of human knowledge; it is available to every man, woman and child; and it brings to the intellectually hungry a feast of the best things, the most nourishing things in science and literature and art and life. The renewed inspiration and efficiency resulting from the convention will be far reaching in its effect upon the minds and lives of the people of the Southwest.”

Jerome Dean Simpson
Documents Librarian
New Mexico State Library