

LIBRARIES ON WHEELS

"What will you have today," politely inquires the man at the door as he displays his wares, "some nice fresh novels, a good thick biography, a few flavory short stories or a tender piece of verse,"

For this, according to the American Library association, is the latest household convenience—the public library on wheels bringing its service to your door. To the ranks of milkmen, ice-men, etc., has been added in many places the bookman, and now householders in those parts may have their

mental food as regularly as their groceries.

The bookman drives a special truck that is virtually a sectional bookcase on wheels. In it he carries a selection of books which he has made after learning his "route" and the desires of the people he meets. If he doesn't have a volume wanted he takes his patron's order and mails the book at once or brings it to him on the next trip.

Although originated in 1905 in Washington county, Maryland, book trucks have not been employed to any extent until recent years. Now with a survey of library service conducted by

the library association which reveals that forty-five per cent of the population of the United States and Canada is without access to libraries—the figure running up to eighty-three per cent for rural residents—librarians are turning to the book truck as one of the chief means by which the country's store of books may be mobilized and placed within the convenience of all.

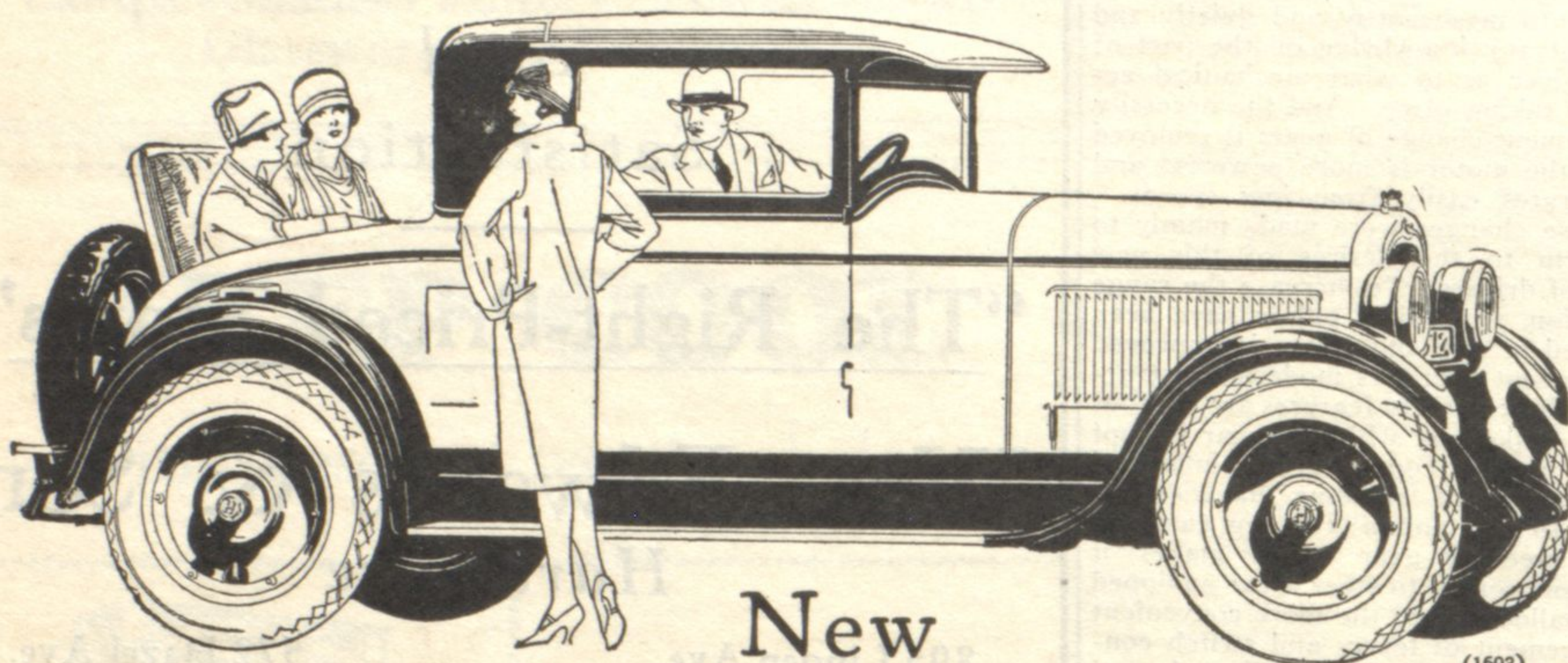
The service rendered varies with conditions in the communities where the book truck travels. In Greenville, S. C., it goes mostly to workers in the cotton mills on the edge of the city. From Hibbing, Minn., a truck travels

out to small mining towns, while St. Louis, Mo., maintains a truck which visits the playgrounds of the city with books for school children.

The widest use for the "motorized library," however, is in the rural districts. Logansport, Elkhart and Rochester are three of five Indiana towns which send books into the country. Similar work is done by Portland, Ore., Durham, S. C., Clarkesdale, Miss., and several other cities. Birmingham, Ala., Harrisburg, Pa., Detroit, Mich., and other large centers have individual problems in county library extensions which they have worked out by means of the book truck. The public libraries of Evanston, Ill., and Dayton, Ohio, also employ book trucks to make more convenient the resources of their shelves. Where a community is sparsely populated, as in the rural districts, book deposits are left at country stores or other centrally located points.

Recently the Iowa Library association has equipped a book truck and started it on a tour of the state to demonstrate the service. It is hoped eventually to have such a truck in every county. Country wide appreciation of the need is indicated by a group of representative farm women who recently met in Chicago to define the greatest needs of farm women. Of thirty-nine wants, "more libraries" headed the list.

The latest model in trucks will be shown at the American library association's exhibition at the Sesqui-Centennial exposition in Philadelphia, which has been assembled in connection with the association's celebration of its fifteenth anniversary. The jubilee will be held October 4-9 in Atlantic City and Philadelphia. Librarians from the forty-eight states and Canadian provinces and many foreign visitors will meet to discuss ways and means for the extension and development of library service.



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