Library Shelves Groan
Under Donated Books

- Number of Volumes Increases
  From a Few Hundred to
  4,000 in Four Years

During the past year 1,000 books,
besides numerous periodicals, have
been sent by friends to the Common­
wealth library, raising the total num­
ber of volumes to approximately 4,
000.

Four years ago the library con­
tained but a few hundred books. Its
growth since then has been made
possible by the steady arrival of con­
tributions from friends, most of
whom have never seen the school.

E. N. Durland of Chicago, for ex­
ample, is aiding the librarian in de­
veloping the psychology department.
He has sent in many other books be­
sides. S. C. Pietraszewski of Detroit,
has contributed many valuable vol­
umes in history and literature. O. O.
Wagner of Millerton, Penn., and
N. B. Butler of Taft, Calif., have sent
complete files of valuable periodicals.

The approximate number of books
in the library on psychology, philo­
osophy, and religion are 260; those
on sociology and economics 900; lan­
guages, 330; natural science, 610;
useful and fine arts, 360; literature,
1240; history, 280. A large number of
these books are rare and difficult
to obtain in the public libraries. The
books on the reference shelf, number­
ing about 300, include the usual acts.

Of the fifty newspapers received at
the library, most are labor organs ex­
changed for the college publication.
The forty-five periodicals and maga­
zines, which include the Nation, Mer­
cury, Forum, and New Republic, are
either exchanged for the Fortnightly
or have been subscribed by college
friends.

The three roomed library, 36x24
feet in dimensions, now barely pro­
vides shelf space for the books and
the stacks of periodicals.

The outside of the building has
been finished with siding. The in­

[Continued on Page Four]

Thanks, Friends

CASH

Christ Church Cathedral, St.
Louis, Mo. ........................................... $25.00
Daniel Hartman, Coopersburg
Pa. ..................................................... 10.00
Harriet Babcock Boston, Mass. .... 10.00
Peter Hoedemaker, Little Falls,
N. J. .................................................. 25.00
D. O. Wagner, Sr., Millerton,
Pa. ..................................................... 25.00
M. W. Rapaport, Chicago, Ill. ... 50.00
Bricklayers Union No. 1, Lit­
tie Rock, Ark. .................................... 25.00
A. S. Oke, Millersvili, Ohio ... 10.00
Frederick N. MacMillin, Mil­
waukee, Wis. ...................................... 25.00
Peter Boike, D. C., Cincinnati,
Ohio .................................................. 25.00
J. A. Harfesld, Kansas City,
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A Commoner's Night

If you were a Hill Bily, a native
Arkansawyer, in search of Common­
wealth's storekeeper on a Friday
night between 7:30 and 10:30 o'clock,
you would have wondered where all
the Commoners were. You wouldn't
have been surprised at anything
though, for you'd have heard that
Commoners are a queer bunch.

You might have noticed a light
over at White Lodge and walked in
that direction. As you neared the
building you would have heard a
medley of excited voices and said to
yourself, "that noisy bunch of Com­
moners is scrapping, I guess."

But if you had looked through the
window you would have seen a room­
ful of "furiners" dressed in all sorts
of clothes, and scattered about the
room—in chairs, on benches, on the
floor, on a couch, yes, even on the
table. One person seated in a large
leather chair, with the light of a
shaded kerosene lamp streaming upon
him, and with books and papers piled
about him, would have impressed you
with an air of importance.

Being curious, you even might have
been tempted to listen a bit. If
you did you probably would have
heard something of this sort: "Do

Rapaports Enthused
With Commonwealth

Forty Acres of Land are Pur­
chased So That They Might
Be Near College During
Vacation Months

After a two week visit at Com­
monwealth to find out first-hand
"what the place was like," and to
determine the possibility of an "in­
ant" industry for the college, Mr.
and Mrs. Rapaport and their com­
panion, Hudson Daily, have left for
Chicago where the Rapaports have
their home and businesses.

"From now on we expect to have
you with us for at least six months
out of the year," Dr. W. E. Zeuch
told the Rapaports as, surrounded
by handshaking Commoners, they were
entering their car to leave. "Nothing
would please us more," Mrs. Rapap­
port answered. While here the Rap­
aports purchased forty acres of tim­
bered land adjacent to college prop­
erty so that they, if so desiring,
might be near the college during their
vacation months.

The Rapaports and Daily fell with
cease into the Commonwealth way of
living. Mrs. Rapaport won her way
into the hearts of the students by her
sympathy and interest, and skill in
unraveling the mysteries of unpastry recipes. During several after­
noons Mr. Rapaport doggedly fish­
ed building stone out of Mill creek.
Meanwhile Daily, farmer by birth
and candy-maker by trade, plowed
and made peanut brittle. All three
visited classes and attended evening
circles.

"The thing that has impressed me
during my stay," said Mr. Rapaport
just before leaving, "is the lack of
formality between students and
teachers. The Commonwealth at­
mosphere is entirely different from
that of the conventional college."Rapaport also remarked upon a
change towards cosmopolitanism in
the habits and attitudes of Mena peo­
plesince his visit there five years

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Commonwealth College Fortnightly

Volume V, No. 9

June 1, 1929

WILLIAM K. STEELE

What is Commonwealth College?

Commonwealth was organized in 1913 to provide education for workers on a self-supporting basis.

Commonwealth College is located in the Ouachita near Alma, Ark., where it operates agricultural and other industrial enterprises by means of four hours' daily labor from its students and teachers.

Commonwealth seeks to develop in young men and women the capacity to make free use of material means for the labor movement.

Commonwealth is a non-sectarian, non-propaganda institution. It sponsors no particular religion, political, or economic dogma. It holds that scientific experimentation carries the only hope of adjustment or solution of personal and social problems.

Commonwealth is the only institution for higher education where both teachers and students engage in the labor of which the work is a part.

WOLL WOULD!

"Heresies!" cried Matt Woll, and the pack took up the cry. August Danielson, former Commonwealth student, now attending Brookwood Labor College, was expelled recently from his union, Local 246 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners; because he refused to sever all connections with that institution. This is interesting in view of the fact that the Brookwood teachers are members of the American Federation of Teachers—a non-trade union affiliated with the A.F. of L.

"An attack on Danielson is a threat to us all," write Brookwood students in a protest circular.

Boo! Brookwood. The Matt Wolls 'll get you if you don't watch out.

John Mars, guardian of Commonwealth stock and poultry, spends a good deal of his time at the hen house lately. He has formally and earnestly declared war on an army of giant blacksnakes, often five feet and more in length, which persistently eat eggs and disturb his sitting hens.

Commonwealth College Fortnightly

June 1, 1929

Ashland: A Community College

By John E. Kirkpatrick.

The State of Michigan may be, as it is reputed, one of the most conservative commonweatlh, located in the most conservative section of the most conservative nation now on earth. Even so, the secretary of state has just granted a charter to the Board of Directors of "Ashland College, a residence school for young adults," that has fewer conventional and more unusual features about it than can be found, doubtless, in any similar document issued during the last decade this side of, say, Soviet Russia. This charter requires that the government of Ashland College must be controlled by resident workers in the school, that, while it may receive gifts, it chooses to be entirely self-supporting; that it will avoid giving academic credits for "courses"; that its aim is not to teach "subjects" but to consider life; and that, primarily, it seeks to put mature and experienced young people in the way of discovering and adjusting themselves, and to inspire them also to strive for self-mastery and self-development through actual life experiences.

This college will accept a student for only one of its four yearly sessions of eight or ten weeks and it abandons all academic traditions, practices, theories and "subjects." In place of employed teachers there are people actually engaged in the community activities by means of which they gain the larger part of their livelihood. Instead of scholastic subjects, courses and lectures, the major problems and interests of life are offered as topics for study, together with the leading books of the day. These are not prescribed by directors or professors, but are chosen by each student group as they will.

Not only does this college ask for no gifts or subsidies, though it is seeking the use of a small amount of capital upon which it proposes to pay the usual interest, but it does not propose to employ people to care for its grounds, do its chores or perform its household duties. All these it regards as a vital part of human experiences and hence one of the chief opportunities for an education. That some one should pay the larger part of the costs of young people while in school while other perform most of their personal services and still others do all the planning, directing— even of their "activities," — and a large part of the thinking for them, [Continued on Page Three]
SOCIETY NOTES

Victor Aronson, a former Commonwealth student, recently returned from a year's visit to Soviet Russia. From Baltimore he writes: "I am back on the job, organizing for the Marine Workers League. I happen to be secretary of the Baltimore branch just now, and, like the rest of the active delegates here, am busy every minute of the day—sometimes part of the night."

Clay Fulks scored a wallop at Fundamentalism with the appearance of his article: "Dixie Secedes from Science," in the April number of the Canadian Mercury.

The Mercury has to say of him: "Clay Fulks, outstanding libertarian of Dixie, has been fighting for enlightenment and progress for a quarter of a century. Hounded from one school position after another by religious and political bigots, he now has found a refuge at Commonwealth College, Arkansas, where he teaches courses in law and history."

Evolution. How would you teach evolution to Arkansas Fundamentalists? To take them to a zoo and point out a monkey would not be very convincing. Neither would argument be much avail.

Professor F. M. Goodhue, Commonwealth instructor and storekeeper, does neither. When neighbors come to visit, or purchase from the store, he invites them to take a look at Amarintha, "our skeleton," hanging over in the laboratory, "and be sure to notice the coccyx, or three little bones which are all that remain of our bygone tails," he adds smiling.

Neighboring children now often ask for permission to see "the skeleton with a tail." Local parents and preachers, it is thought, will soon have to be answering more questions for inquisitive Willies and Sallys.

Week-Ending. "We are going into the Oklahoma woods to hunt ourselves an Indian," was the only answer curious Commoners received from two students, Ross Brown and Raymond Koch, who appeared in hicking gear at philosophy seminar on a Friday night. "We'll be back late Sunday," they called at 10:30 in the night.

A COMMONER'S NIGHT

[Continued from Page One]

you mean to say, Eric, that that stove has always existed?" "If from the beginning that chair has floated in the air as an idea, how did it become matter?" "I can't understand—did Plato think that—" "Thomas Aquinas said that the unmoved mover—" "Say! who's talking. Gimme a chance—" "I know, but—"

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Don't all talk at once." This from a fair, blue-eyed Nordic, wearing overalls, and seated in a battered leather chair. "I'm not defending these views. I'm just presenting the Platonian notion of the idea, which is: all possible ideas of things exist from the beginning, and the material world of objects grows as we apperceive those ideas."

If you had not already guessed it, you would know by now that this is a class. If you had knocked then, Zeuch would have asked you in. He probably would have invited you to stay and have some bread and jam, and coffee, since the refreshments would be served in a little while. You would have refused no doubt, for you, being an Arkansawyer, wouldn't have felt at ease in this multifarious crowd.

Later, as you walked away from the store, having said goodbye to that affable New Englander, Professor Goodhue, you might have shaken your head and commented: "They're a queer bunch, these Commoners; but they seem to be good folks."

Philosophy seminar, for such it is, is held once a week in the evening as was the drama seminar of last quarter. Every student taking part is assigned a philosopher or field of philosophy on which to do research work and report. The first part of the evening is given to an exposition of some philosopher's system of thought. In an interim refreshments are served. The remainder of the evening is then devoted to discussion.

The course, beginning with the Spring quarter, opened with a study of the Greek philosophers: the pre-Socratic schools, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Thomas Aquinas and the other Church Fathers were next reported upon. Then came Bacon, founder of empiricism; followed by Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Hume. Yet to be reported on are Berkleys, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and the Pragmatic school.

ASHLAND: A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

[Continued from Page Two]

is just what makes for the childish, meaningless and boresome life of the American college of today. In Ashland College, resident students, like their associates who live and work in the community, are masters of their own activities and servants of their own household, even to the dining room and kitchen. All their costs are self-incurred and self-discharged. Every thing relating to the school life, the making of the curriculum, choice of trustees and directors, everything that usually falls to trustees, presidents and deans, here belongs to the students, resident and graduate, though they never "graduate" or receive either credits or degrees.

IV.

In this school, too, amusements, recreation and the lighter interests are regarded as a part of life's educational experiences. "Movies," "talkies," and other modern places where amusements are furnished ready made are here of little interest. Self amusement and entertainment, singing, games of all kinds, dances, athletics, folk plays, dramatics, the handicrafts and arts,—whatever is recreative and entertaining and at the same time beautiful and pleasant,—here finds place and time, because life in Ashland College and its community has been discovered to belong to the here and the now. Life's supreme opportunities, for pleasure, for strength and beauty, for understanding and mastery, are all to be discovered here, if anywhere. Ashland College is, then, a school where the young in years and spirit, the inquirers who have already discovered some of life's perplexities and possibilities, come together for a few weeks only to help each other get into the way of understanding life, of orienting themselves in their daily circles, and of grasping life's opportunities more hopefully, joyfully, vigorously, and masterfully. Ashland College is a community center, not a school which seeks to promote learning for the sake of learning, but to enrich daily living for the sake of a fuller and freer life.

Those books for research which are not in the college library are obtained, by special arrangement, from the St. Louis Library.
Communal Education

IV. THE IDEA TAKES SHAPE

The Commonwealth idea crystallized at Ruskin, from which it borrowed several of its features. Dr. George McK. Miller and his wife, Adelaide Dickman Miller, both ardent Christian Socialists, established Ruskin on a seven thousand acre tract of flat pine land some 20 miles down the bay from Tampa. Their express purpose in establishing the school was to educate young men and women into the Socialist wing of the labor movement.

The school operated an art printing shop which was closely modeled after the William Morris plan. Students were employed in this printing and were paid, not in cash, but in maintenance. The receipts from the sale of their print work were not large enough, however, to alone finance the experiment.

So Miller parceled the land and sold it little by little to radicals and liberals who evinced a desire to build homes in an intellectual environment congenial to their points of view. The school profited enormously from this real estate venture. But as the land was practically useless, requiring considerable capital for development, the purchasers raised a great hue and cry.

The complaints caused no noticeable harm to the school. It continued developing and doubtlessly would still be operating, but for the war. At the time Zeuch arrived to associate himself with it, the school had an enrollment of more than 80 students. With the declaration of war the enrollment dwindled to a bare 30. Most of the students were pacifists and fled to Mexico or elsewhere to avoid the draft. Members of the Miller family themselves went into service.

It was at Ruskin that Zeuch made the acquaintance of Kate Richards O'Hare, now Mrs. Charles C. Cunningham. Mrs. O'Hare was doing publicity work for the college. During the months that Zeuch lectured on psychology at Ruskin, he and Mrs. O'Hare studied the institution (he writes) "talked over our own educational ideas, and decided to work together to establish a school for workers."

But the war prevented them from carrying out their plans. Mrs. O'Hare was sent to prison for voicing her disapproval of war as a means of settling international disputes; and Zeuch was drafted into a government swivel-chair job. Nevertheless, the two clung to their plans and devoted the years of waiting for an opportunity to launch their project to thinking upon it.

Six years of thought and study made it plain to them what a workers' college ought not to be. It ought not to be the handmaiden of any political, economic, or religious group. It ought not to educate workers for better jobs. It ought not to interest itself exclusively in turning out trade union secretaries, soap boxers, or organizers for the various labor groups. These six years of thought and study convinced them that a workers' college ought to be academically free and ought therefore to be economically independent. It ought to stand for the experimental or scientific attitude in dealing with personal and social problems. It ought to be primarily interested in developing personalities with the capacity for service in the labor movement.

Their minds clear on a program, they were naturally impatient to get the project going. But a suitable location for the kind of resident workers' college they had in mind could not be found. While traveling about the country in 1923, Mrs. O'Hare "happened" upon Llano Colony, a producers' co-operative experiment, located near Leesville, Louisiana. It seemed to her to meet the requirements. She wrote to Zeuch, who was then on the staff of the University of Illinois, to hurry down and "look the place over."

Library Shelves Groan

UNDER DONATED BOOKS

[Continued from Page One]

side walls are rough. Bookshelves reach from the floor to the top of the walls. There is no ceiling. Paintings and portraits have been artistically hung by Mrs. Hilda Mills, librarian.

The reading room, 18 x 24 feet, is heated by a large stone fireplace. One of the two smaller rooms, each 12 x 18 feet, contains books. In the other the shelves are overflowing with stacks of periodicals and magazines. Here, also, are the reference books.

Critics are like horse-flies which prevent the horse from ploughing.—Chekhov.

Rapaports Enthused with Commonwealth

[Continued from Page One]

ago. He believes Commonwealth to have been an influence in this change.

Mrs. Rapaport expressed surprise at the number of buildings, the accommodations, and the development of the scenic possibilities of the location. In remarking on the educational aspect of the college, she said: "Here you teach people to think. You don't follow any one text; but get together and discuss things. This, I think, is very good. Your classes here remind me of the Greek teachers of the market place who gathered students about them and taught through discussion."

Society Notes

[Continued from Page Three]

evening, then vanished into the darkness.

The hikers, tired and hungry, were back for the Sunday noon meal. "We did see an Indian," they told Commoners, "also a wolf's skeleton and virgin pine timber; but, most interesting of all, a company sawmill town called Pine Valley."

"A resident told us," said Ross Brown, "that the Dierks Lumber Company owned the entire town—the mill, the department store, the hotel, the church, the ball park, the movie house, and incidentally, the people." Two and a quarter dollars for a ten-hour day was said to be the usual wage of the sawmill workers.

"Tolerance" was the message Prof. F. A. Postnikov, ex-Colonel in the Russian Army, and ex-Captain in the United States Army, brought recently to fellow members of the American Legion at Mena, Arkansas, on the invitation of their Post Commander. And "Russia" was the subject for another talk given on invitation a few days later before the History students of the Mena High School. Three years ago the American Legion was itching to "burn" Commonwealth to the ground because it was "receiving money from Red Russia."

I have seen too much and know too much. If I wrote my memoirs not a man would go to war even if the security of his country demanded it.—Clemenceau.

Opinions are stronger than armies. —Palmerston.