

1945

## EC5509 Revised 1945 Book Exhibits

Clara B. Johnson

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*Muriel Smith*

Nebraska  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK  
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating  
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

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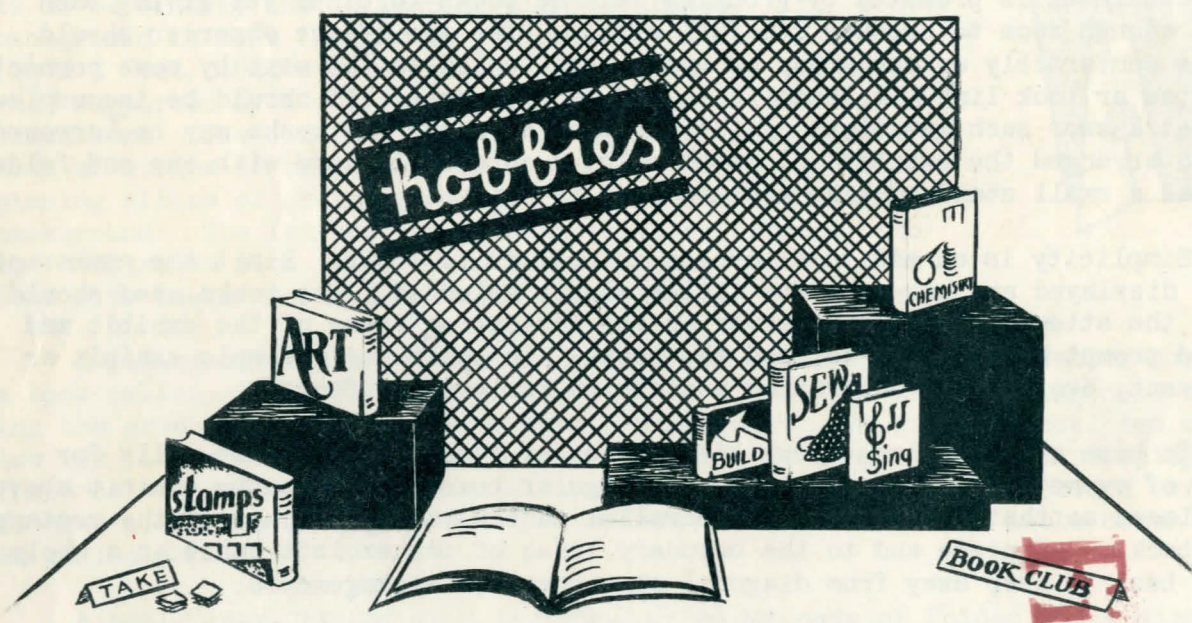
# Book Exhibits

by  
Clara B. Johnson, Nebraska Public Library Commission

Presenting a book exhibit at a community fair, a county achievement day, or convention is an effective way to attract people to books. A well designed display that shows individuality will catch public notice and convey its message. In the exhibition room, competition for the attention of visitors will be keen so, to be successful, the book exhibit should be thoughtfully planned and carefully arranged.

The essential steps in developing an exhibit are to select a striking theme, choose books that will focus attention on that one subject, and then provide the materials for presenting them in a colorful, interesting arrangement.

An exhibit of books on hobbies may be considered:



Two card tables were pushed together and covered with white paper to make the base for this exhibit of hobby books. The background held up by braces is of compo board, 2½ x 3 feet, covered with red checked gingham. Black poster paper tacked on as one wide and two narrow strips provide a foundation for the theme word, "hobbies," which is spelled out in white cotton clothesline rope. The letters are formed when the background is lying flat and the rope word is fastened to it with heavy pins. The black boxes are cartons cut to three sizes

covered over with black crepe paper. They provide a good display elevation which lends interest by giving a variety of height and depth. Notice how they are grouped as an exhibit unit. Colorful book jackets are fitted neatly over dummy books to indicate interesting book titles for the hobby reader. The hobbies represented in the books exhibited were: knowing native birds, stamp collection, needlecraft, amateur photography, the flower garden, cartoons, and old fashioned quilts.

Using paper jackets instead of the books combines economy with display effect. The book jackets are attractive in bright colors while at the same time the actual books are kept in use by readers and are not tied up in an exhibit. For a dummy, one can use a cast off text book, a block of wood or pasteboard box cut to fit the jacket. Occasionally an open book is used when some particularly useful illustration is wanted.

Effective arrangement requires order, clearness, simplicity, balance, and emphasis. If first a sketch of a proposed exhibit is made to show lay out, one can examine it with a critical eye and correct it to meet these given requirements before the exhibit is really set up.

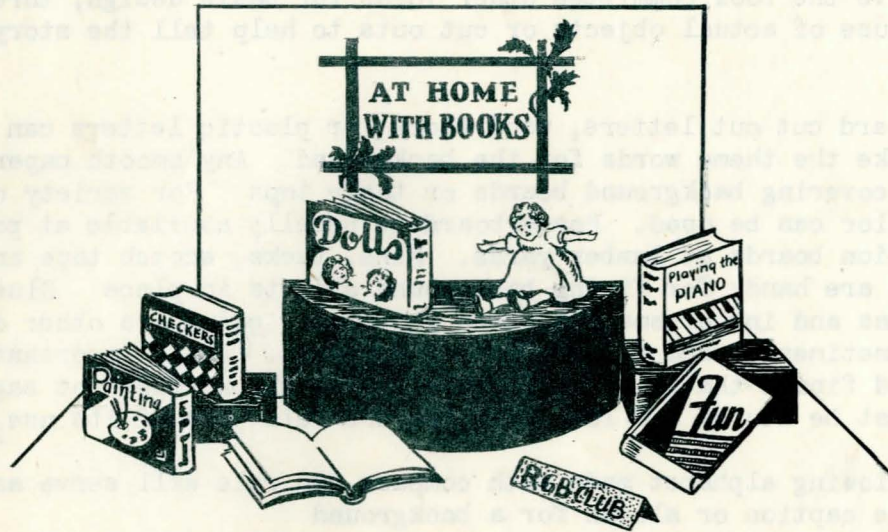
An orderly pattern of arrangement invites the eye and is easy to follow. An arrangement that is disorderly or sprawling lacks distinction. Any arrangement that is without order gives a restless effect.

Clearness is promoted by grouping related books together yet giving each title enough room to produce its full effect. The eye of the observer should settle comfortably on one group of books then be led to the next by some connecting line or book link. A label is an aid to clearness. It should be inconspicuous yet answer such questions of the observer as where the books may be borrowed or who arranged the exhibit. A label printed on a small card with one end folded back as a small standard like a place card is suitable.

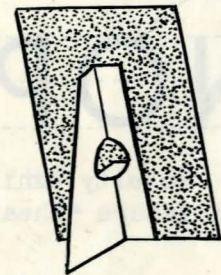
Simplicity is an aid to clearness as well as to looks. Limit the number of books displayed and have the few titles wisely selected. The books used should focus the attention of the observer on the dominating theme of the exhibit **and should prompt him to want to read the books**. In achieving a simple exhibit arrangement, avoid fussy decoration and strive for broad effects.

To have a well balanced exhibit is another requirement and it calls for study of symmetry and harmony. The rectangular boxes of the hobby exhibit above are placed so that their lines are parallel to the boundary lines of the rectangular background piece and to the boundary lines of the exhibit space as a whole. It is best to keep away from diagonal or cornerwise arrangements.

Well placed emphasis is important for attracting attention to the exhibit. The arrangement should provide book grouping around a central point toward which the eye is led and at which the leading idea of the display is found. In the hobby book exhibit the word, "hobbies," spelled in rope is the central point. It makes a strong impression quickly. Another example is shown on the following page.

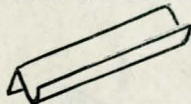


The homelike touch in this exhibit conveys the idea of pleasurable use of books in family life. The books featured by gay book jackets fixed on book dummies are about games, embroidery, crafts, music and play of interest to both parents and children. They are so placed as to be orderly and in keeping with clearness. The poster background is made from heavy yellow colored card board ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  x 3 feet) that stands upright at the back of the table when supported by a stiff standard or paste board easel as shown here. The old fashioned crossed corner motto frame is made of strips of brown card set out from the background by pinning slices of ordinary bottle corks between it and the background. The letters can be stencilled or printed onto the background with olive green colored poster paint. "At Home With Books" becomes the note of emphasis.



A semicircular display elevation in brown color used in the center supports a book called, DOLLS TO MAKE, and a brightly dressed little stocking doll repeating the green motif, lends an authentic atmosphere. To give balance, two other low box like elevations are used at either side to support books in display. These can be made of wood painted brown or they could be of paste board cartons covered with paper to carry out the exhibit color scheme. The table cover used is yellow paper.

A small label placed in a rectangular holder made of folded tin indicates the club that arranged the exhibit. Sometimes the local library or state library commission can furnish little give away publicity folders directing the observer to the use of their book facilities.

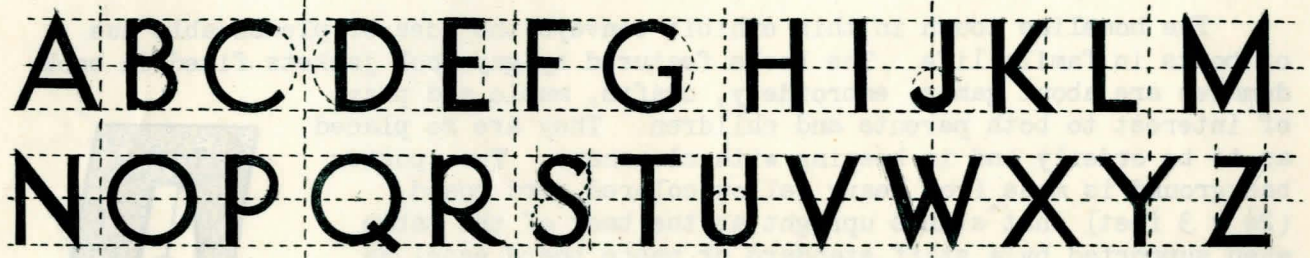


In addition to the requirements of the arrangement of the exhibit is the need for ingenuity in providing the decorative element. It is this that catches the eye and prompts the visitors to stop and look and then to resolve to borrow some books for the family to enjoy.

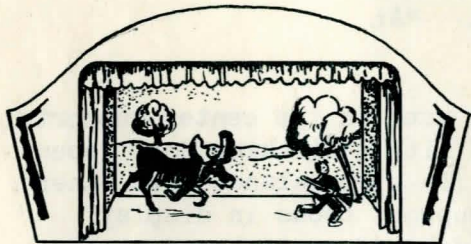
The background has largely provided the decoration in both sample exhibits already given. Color and the materials creating the theme or slogan have given each background its allure. Observation of devices used by commercial exhibitors will give the book committee other ideas for basic design, three dimensional effects and use of actual objects or cut outs to help tell the story or theme of the exhibit.

Card board cut out letters, wood block, or plastic letters can sometimes be bought to make the theme words for the background. Any smooth paper in color can be used for covering background boards or table tops. For variety corrugated papers in color can be used. Posterboard is usually available at printing shops and composition boards at lumber yards. Pins, tacks, scotch tape and passe partout tape are handy for fixing background objects in place. Glue or cement, lettering pens and ink or small brushes and poster paint are other display materials sometimes needed for decorative purposes. (It is important to provide materials and finish that will be durable. The exhibit must not sag or fade, rather it must be sturdy and look well for the full time of its use.)

The following alphabet made with compass and rule will serve as a guide in lettering the caption or slogan for a background.

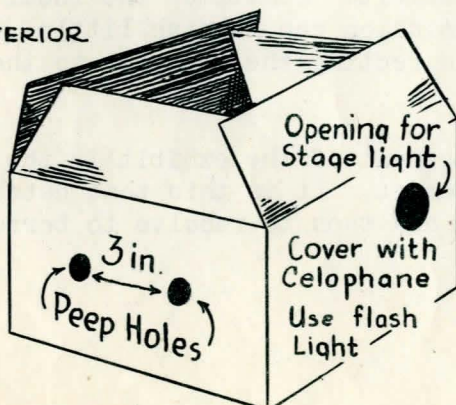


Novelty exhibits for Book Week programs or special days are often effective. A miniature "theater," can be installed in a section of a wall book case or in a box on a shelf for little scenic exhibits. The box theatre could resemble the appearance of one used for shadow plays or puppet shows by fixing a false front on the box. Sometimes illumination makes the small "stage" more real and the fixed miniature story book characters and setting as shown here from HONK THE MOOSE are entertaining to see especially when children form a part of the audience.

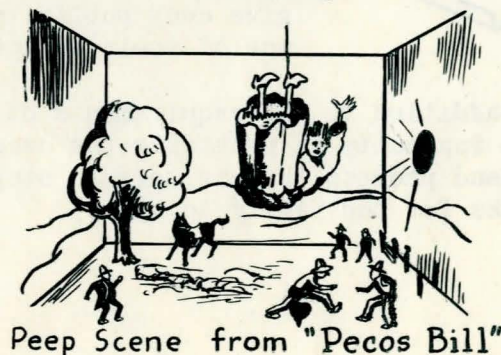


Another novelty, a peep show dramatizes the book exhibit. Arrange a miniature setting using tiny stiffened cut out figures to represent a story incident all within a show box or small carton. It is fun to charge a penny a "peep" and the observer exclaims over the "show" attracting others to take a peep.

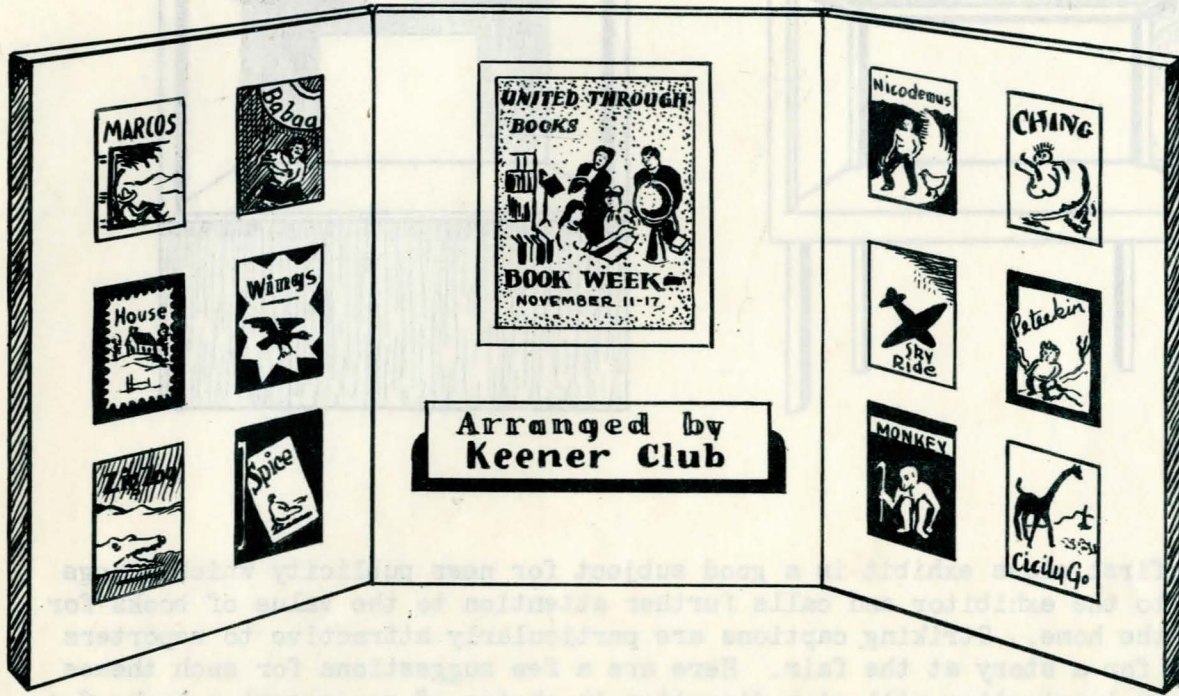
EXTERIOR



INTERIOR



Simple displays may be made using a large screen set up on the floor as this three panel exhibit. The Book Week poster has been used on the center panel and it furnishes the theme for the exhibit. Book jackets of intriguing books for boys and girls are used on the side panels. A small label identifies the club responsible for the arrangement.

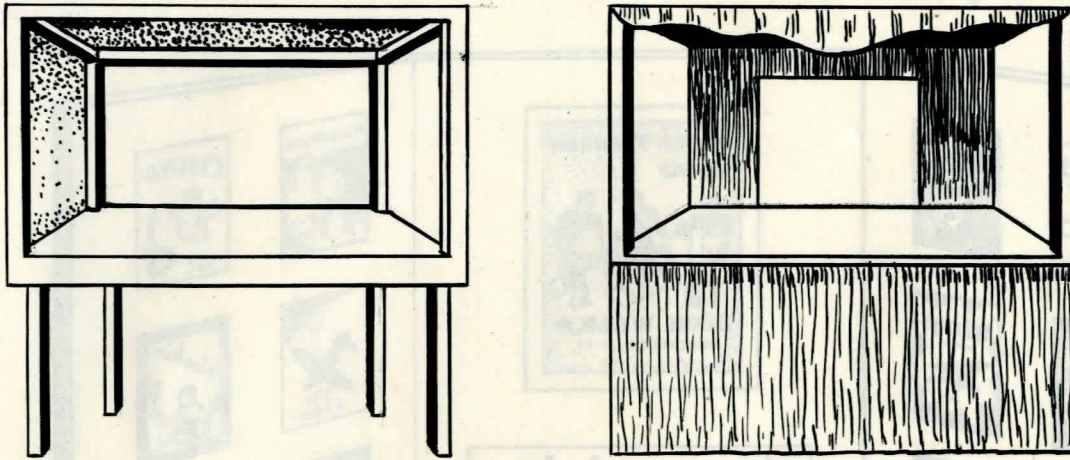


For a large exhibition hall at a county fair a booth may be necessary for the book exhibit. A framework of laths set up on a rough table may be used as a foundation for the effect you wish as shown in the sketches which follow.

Cloth or durable paper may be used on the frame for a simple valance, a back drop and table skirt making the book exhibit visible from three sides. Then any book display may be shown in the booth as has already been described above as table arrangements.

The booth as a book exhibit sometimes calls for an attendant which offers a unique opportunity for meeting people, for observing popular attitude toward books, reading and libraries as well as employing a personal method of presenting the display shown.

Sketches showing first the framework and then the finished booth ready for placing the book exhibit:



A first class exhibit is a good subject for news publicity which brings credit to the exhibitor and calls further attention to the value of books for use in the home. Striking captions are particularly attractive to reporters looking for a story at the fair. Here are a few suggestions for such themes and one's imagination will give direction in choice of accompanying books for the exhibit. "Go Places With Books!" "For a More Abundant Life," "Cookery," "A Musical Medley," "For the Lady of the House," "Nebraska Books and Authors," "Round Up," "Growing Up With Books," "Fragrant Path," and "The World We Live In."

After the book exhibit is finished it is well to stand back and view it with a critical eye. An authority in viewing the display would consider it by asking, Does it attract attention? Does it arouse interest? Does it create a desire to possess? Does it make me want to make a purchase or use a service? If your exhibit passes these tests it will have fulfilled its purpose to attract others to the pleasant and profitable use of books in the home.

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Sources:

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 Burt, MAKE YOUR BAZAAR PAY  
 Heller, NEW STANDARD LETTERER  
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Sketches in this circular were drawn by Betty Lamb, Lincoln