

Typescript of Ruth W. Brown Archive: 7.

MISS RUTH W. BROWN
PUBLIC LIBRARY
BARTLESVILLE, OKLA.

July 25, 1950

City Manager's Office

Those present: Mayor Dunaway

City Manager Jones

City Attorney Rowand

Commissioner Margenau

" Forrest

" Hinton

Miss Ruth Brown

Object of meeting--to question me as to "certain stories & rumours."

I went before the Mayor.

"Questions pertaining to operation of the Library I will be glad to answer. Questions as to my [p.2] personal life are my personal life. I will answer these only if stated in writing, my answers to be given in the same form."

Mr. Dunaway read the above statement & it sounded as though I would answer no questions & that angered them, quite naturally. I told them I did not say that & asked the Mayor to read my statement again.

Then they began questions--the Mayor first--

"Miss Brown, did you take two young colored women [p.3] with you to a drug store where they weren't supposed to be?" I answered, "Personal question to be answered only in writing." To other questions on the same line I made the same reply.

Mayor. "Have you ever signed the Loyalty Oath?"

I. "I have never seen a copy but would be willing to sign one."

City Manager, searching thru papers on the desk. "I told Mrs. Sanderson to have a copy here but I can't find it."

(No copy was found)

[p.4] Next, Margenau, who had a long list of written questions.

Margenau: "You agree to the Old Board's decision as to the "Nation" & "New Republic?"

I. "I do."

Margenau: "How many years had the Library taken them?"

I. "I do not remember, 50 or 20 yrs."

Margenau. "What do you think of buying such trash from your very inadequate book fund?"

[p.5] I. "Considering that they were our only two liberal magazines and that we subscribed to about 75 other magazines, I felt perfectly justified. As to our inadequate book fund, that merely meant a more careful spending, & mine was careful."

Margenau. "What about the advertising in the New Republic? Didn't you know there were some very bad things advertised there?"

I. "~~Did you~~ Mr. Margenau, I don't know what you are talking about"

[p.6] Margenau: "Did you read Soviet Russia Today [sic]?"

I. "Very little, for I found it boring."

Margenau "How many free publications did you receive?"

I. "I do not remember, though they were listed in our report."

Margenau "And you did not read all of them? Wasn't it your duty?"

I "I did not so consider it but considered my public capable of deciding what they wanted to read".

[p.7] Margenau "But weren't they accessible to our young people?"

I "They had never heard of them until this controversy started!"

Margenau: "Did you ever have a picture of Paul Robeson hanging in your library?"

I "Not to my knowledge."

Margenau: "Would you be willing to put that in writing?"

I "Mr. Margenau, I would for I am not lying."

Margenau: "Don't you know Paul Robeson is a Communist?"

I: "I do not."

[p. 8] Margenau: "You, a librarian, and do not know that?"

I. "I do not know he has ever said he is a Communist."

Margenau: "Don't you listen to the radio?"

I "Not often for I prefer to read"

Now Mr. Margenau speaks of the great harm I have done to Bartlesville.

I replied. "I do not consider I have done any harm."

Mr. Margenau: "I understand you to say you are not a Communist"

I "I certainly am not."

[p. 9] Now Mr. Forrest decided to make a few remarks.

Forrest. "Of course we will agree that what Miss Brown is advocating is according to the Bible & is constitutional, but it is not according to the majority in Bartlesville."

I: "Are you sure? I would like to see a poll taken of that."

Mr. Forrest said he was sure & Mr. Margenau very vehemently was sure.

Margenau: "Miss Brown, if you remain here as librarian would you agree to do nothing [p. 10] more that would harm Bartlesville?"

I "Mr. Margenau I have said that I have done nothing that would harm Bartlesville, but if the young man who interviewed me last week should send this story to a national magazine as he is thinking of doing, that would not be very good for Bartlesville."

Margenau. "Miss Brown, did that happen?" (Mr. Margenau practically rose to his feet.)

I "It did."

Margenau "Who is this young man?"

I "I am not saying."

Margenau ~~"Who is this young man?"~~ "Does he live here?"

I "I am not saying."

Margenau "Do you mean you talked to him without saying anything to us?"

I "I do. It was my private life."

Margenau: "Mr. Mayor, we can't have this. They might make her out a martyr."

I "Oh no, they don't want my biography."

Margenau "Mr. Mayor, write this resolution

Miss Brown is not to interview [p.12] this man again & if he writes this he must show it to the commissioners.

Rowland: "But you can't stop a reporter."

Margenau: "You still refuse to answer personal questions except in writing?"

I. "I do, my attorney so advised." They said that was all and I left.

An hour afterward the City Manager called & said:

"Miss Brown, the commissioners asked me to read you this statement before it goes to [p.13] the paper."

He then read the statement of my dismissal and that is the only notice I have had--not a word in writing.

The above meeting was an executive meeting, without the presence of the City Clerk, Mrs. Eva Sanderson, who normally records the commissioner's meetings--thus no record was kept for investigation by the public. Mrs. Sanderson, however, was called in as I left the room.

[Note : Each page is headed with the imprint : MISS RUTH W. BROWN | PUBLIC LIBRARY |
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July 25, 1950

City Manager's Office

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City Attorney Howard
Commissioner Margenau
" Forges
" Hinton
Miss Ruth Brown

Object of meeting - to question as to
"certain stories & rumors."

I went in & laid this typed state-
ment before the Mayor.

"Question is pertaining to operation
of the library & will be glad to
answer questions as to my

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"Miss Brown, did you take
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I made the same reply.

Mayor: "Have you ever signed
the Loyalty oath?"

I: "I have never seen a copy
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City Manager: "searching thru
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(No copy was found)

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Next, Margenau, who had a long list of written questions.

Margenau: "You agree to the old board's decision as to the 'Nation' & 'New Republic'?"

I, "I do."

Margenau: "Who was responsible for those magazines being ordered?"

I, "I was."

Margenau: "How many years had the library taken them?"

I, "I do not remember, 15 or 20 yrs."

Margenau: "What do you think of buying such trash from your very inadequate book fund?"

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I: "Considering that they were our only two liberal magazines and that we subscribed to about 75 other magazines, I felt perfectly justified. As to our inadequate book fund, that merely meant a more careful spending, & Mrs. was careful."

Margenau: "What about the advertising in the New Republic? Didn't you know there were some very bad things advertised there?"

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the paper.

It then read the statement of my
dismissal and that is the
only notice I have had - not a word
in writing.

The above meeting was an executive
meeting, without the presence
of the City Clerk, My. E. Sanderson,
who normally records the
commissioner's meetings -
thus no record was kept for
investigation by the public.
Mrs. Sanderson, however, was
called in as I left the room.