THE GEORGIA LITERATURE COMMISSION*

BY

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Both the Federal and state governments have become actively involved in the field of obscenity regulation. The Federal government has invoked its powers over the postal system and over interstate commerce to enact several laws to control obscenity. This has represented the extent of the Federal attempts in the field. The states, on the other hand, have enacted obscenity legislation based upon their police powers. A few states have gone even further to establish quasi-judicial agencies for the purpose of seeking out obscene material and suppressing it.

The purpose of this article is to analyze briefly the problem of obscenity and to examine in some detail the way in which the state of Georgia, acting through just such an agency, has attempted to deal with this problem.

THE PROBLEM OF OBSCENITY

Although there are differences of opinion as to whether or not obscene material should be suppressed, even the most liberal elements in our society will admit that obscenity poses a problem to the society. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that it is extremely difficult—if not utterly impossible—to formulate a comprehensive definition of "obscenity." A careful perusal of the literature dealing with this subject will immediately reveal that a substantial definition of the concept is lacking. It is a rather simple matter to consult a dictionary for the definition of "obscene," but to do so only confuses the matter further, as is indicated in the following statement by a New York police captain testifying in 1952 before the House Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials:

> I took the trouble before coming down here of looking up the definitions of "obscene," and it says "lurid, lascivious, indecent." I looked up the word "indecent," and they referred back to "obscene," and so on. They could have simply just used the word "obscene," and left the other out.[1]

*The greater part of the information on the Georgia Literature Commission contained in this article is the product of the author's own interpretation of data obtained through research in the files of the Commission and trrough interviews with the Commissioners and other knowledgeable individuals.

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1. Testimony of Louis I. Ross, commanding officer of the legal bureau of the New York City Police Department, before the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials of the United States House of Representatives, 82nd Congress, 2nd Session.

There have been many gallant efforts by interested individuals and groups, as well as by the nation's courts, to set forth a workable definition of obscenity, but most of these definitions have proven to be inadequate —mainly because the criteria embodied in them was deficient. In point of fact, it is impossible to formulate a single definition of obscenity which will include all the criteria necessary for making an objective appraisal of questionable material. Some literature which is judged to be obscene by an established set of criteria may in actuality represent a sincere effort to contribute to society. Thus, in order for a definition of obscenity to be adequate, it must encompass *all* obscene literature but at the same time provide a standard for discriminating between that which is strictly obscene and devoid of literary merit and that which borders on obscenity but yet has literary merit. In actuality, obscenity is a purely subjective concept determined by the individual's covert moral precepts and the generally-accepted moral standards of society at a particular time.

Present Law Governing Obscenity

Despite the apparent futility of their efforts, the nation's courts have persisted in their quest for a firm verbal footing on the issue of obscenity, which has led to considerable litigation in both state and Federal courts. Due to the fact that the language incorporated into most of the obscenity statutes has been vague and its meaning only transitory, we find that the courts have made a consistent attempt to define the language of the statutes and make it explicit. Lacking adequate statutory definitions of obscenity, the courts have had no choice but to do the best they can with a very complex concept.

Ultimate authority for deciding cases pertaining to obscenity resides in the Supreme Court of the United States. While recognizing that freedoms of speech and press are essential to the survival of a democratic society, that court also recognizes that certain restrictions upon these freedoms are necessary for the preservation of a democratic society. In *Ex Parte Jackson*,[2] for example, the Court declared that freedom of speech and press was not absolute, nor was it ever assumed to be.

The most important case in the field of obscenity was *Roth v. United States*,[3] which served to establish most of the standards relating to obscenity. In the *Roth* case, the Court attempted to define the area of constitutionally-protected speech:

> All ideas having even the slightest redeeming social importance—unorthodox ideas, controversial ideas, even ideas hateful to the prevailing climate of opinion—have the full protection of the guaranties, unless excludable because they encroach upon the limited area of more important interests. But implicit in the history of

2. 96 N. S. 727 (1877).
3. 354 U. S. 476 (1957).

> the First Amendment is the rejection of obscenity as being without redeeming social importance.[4]

Now the difficulty lay in determining which writings contained ideas of "redeeming social importance." What was the method to be used in determining whether or not a particular writing was obscene?

The Court provided the answer to this question by defining obscenity and formulating a test for it. "Obscenity" was defined in the following manner:

"A thing is obscene if ,considered as a whole, the predominant appeal is to prurient interest, for example, a shameful or morbid interest in nudity, sex or excretion, and if it goes substantially beyond the customary limits of candor in description or representation of such matters."[5]

The test of obscenity set forth by the Court was "whether to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest."[6]

In *Jacobellis v. Ohio,*[7] the Supreme Court held that "contemporary community standards" applied to society in general and not to any particular community. Of course, the difficulty involved in specifically determining these standards is readily apparent.

The Supreme Court was very careful to separate "sex" from "obscenity" in *Roth.* Since sex has long been considered a subject of human interest and a motivating and mysterious force in human life, the portrayal or depiction of this subject in literature, according to the Court, is not "obscene." Material which does not treat sex in a manner appealing to prurient interest has been accorded full protection under the first and fourteenth amendments.

In *Ginzburg v. United States,*[8] the Supreme Court declared that, in determining the obscenity of material, the setting in which the publications are presented, the circumstances of presentation, and the mode of dissemination of the material are relevant factors. It was further stated that material lending itself to a pervasive treatment or description of sexual matters and designed for the specific purpose of appealing to salacious tastes may support the contention that the material in question is obscene.

Fanny Hill v. Massachusetts[9] involved a slight modification of the social importance standard first established in the *Roth* case. In *Fanny Hill,* the Court ruled that a publication could not be proscribed unless it was "utterly without redeeming social value."[10]

For the most part, the Georgia courts have relied upon the United States Supreme Court's definition of obscenity. The reason for this is, of course, because the latter court is the ultimate authority in the field of obscenity.

4. *Ibid.,* at p. 483.
5. *Ibid.,* footnote at p. 487.
6. *Ibid.,* at p. 487.
7. 378 U. S. 184 (1964).
8. 86 S. Ct. 942 (1966).
9. 86 S. Ct. 975 (1966).
10. *Ibid.,* at p. 978.

The constitutionality of obscenity laws in the state of Georgia is usually challenged under art. 1, section 1, para. 2 and art. 1, section 1, para. 15 of the Constitution of Georgia. Art. 1, section 1, para. 2 provides:

"Protection to person and property is a paramount duty of government and shall be impartial and complete."

Art. I, section I, para. 15 provides:

"No law shall ever be passed to curtail, or restrain the liberty of speech, or of the press; any person may speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty."

The cases involving obscene material that have been reviewed by the Georgia Supreme Court and the Georgia Court of Appeals are relatively few in number as compared with those considered by the United States Supreme Court. In fact, the majority of all the obscenity cases within the state of Georgia are disposed of at the trial court level, and very few ever reach the appellate courts. The majority of the cases which do reach these courts involve either the offense of public indecency or that of using vulgar and obscene language in the presence of a female.

Creation of the Georgia Literature Commission

The widespread publicity given the hearings held by the Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials of the United States House of Representatives during 1952 served to focus the nation's attention upon the nature and extent of the problem of obscenity within the United States. During the first few months of 1953, fourteen states—Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and Wisconsin—enacted legislation to control, penalize, or change the penalties for distribution of obscene material.[11] Of these fourteen states, Georgia enacted the most unique legislation.

In February of 1953, the Georgia General Assembly officially recognized the seriousness of the problem of obscenity within the state by voting unanimously to pass H.B. 247 establishing the Georgia Literature Commission. With the passage of this bill, Georgia became the first state to make an attempt at dealing with this problem through the establishment of an official agency for the purpose of supervising the enforcement of the state's obscenity statutes.

This bill provided for a three-man commission to be established for the purpose of making "such investigations as may be necessary into all sales of literature which they have reason to suspect is detrimental to the morals of the citizens of this State."[12] To this end, the Commission was empowered to hold hearings and make findings on literature which it considered

11. American Book Publishers Council, *Review of Major Developments in State Legislatures (January-July, 1953)* (New York: American Book Publishers Council, August, 1963), mimeographed, p. 1.
12. H. B. 247, §4.

to be obscene. Upon the Commission's determination that the material in question was obscene, it was authorized to prohibit the distribution of the material by notifying the offending party, or parties, thirty days prior to recommending prosecution to the solicitor-general in whose circuit the material was sold. (At this point, the distributor had two alternatives open to him: (1) he could comply with the request of the Commission that the questionable material be removed from sale, or (2) he could take no action on the Commission's request and ultimately contest its findings in a court of law.) Prosecution of the offending parties was to proceed under GA. CODE section 26-6301 (1933) which made it illegal to bring into the state, possess, sell, lend, give away, or offer to give away any indecent or obscene book, pamphlet, magazine, newspaper, or printed paper. Weekly and daily newspapers, material relating to federal and state matters, and reading material used in recognized religious, scientific, or educational institutions in the United States were not made subject to the act.

In accordance with the provisions of H.B. 247, three citizens "of the highest moral character" were appointed as members of the Commission by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate for four-year terms. Appointed by Governor Talmadge during the latter part of February, 1953 were: Dr. James P. Wesberry, Pastor of Atlanta's Morningside Baptist Church; Hubert L. Dyar, Royston newspaper owner; and William R. Boswell, Greensboro theater owner. Dr. Wesberry was elected the first chairman of the Commission. Mr. Boswell resigned from the Commission in 1961, and R. Clayton Bowers, principal of Troup County High School in LaGrange, was appointed as his successor. Bowers held this position until his death in November, 1964. He was succeeded on the Commission by Marcus B. Calhoun, a Thomasville attorney. When Calhoun resigned from the Commission in March, 1967, he was succeeded by Dr. William R. Dyer, a Moultrie chiropractor. Wesberry and Dyar have served continuously on the Commission since 1953.

In order to eliminate any vagueness as to what was meant by "literature" and "obscene literature," the General Assembly hastened to include a definition of these terms in the act creating the Commission. Section 1 of H.B. 247 defined "literature" as "any book, pamphlet, paper, drawing, lithograph, engraving, photograph, or picture." "Obscene literature" was defined as "literature offensive to the chastity or modesty, expressing or presenting to the mind or view something that purity and decency forbids to be exposed." Although this section of the act supposedly presented an explicit definition of obscene literature, it is hard to imagine any definition of the term which could have been more vague!

For purposes of uniformity in the judgment of questionable literature and in order to eliminate personal prejudice therein as much as possible, the Commission, on April 10, 1953, adopted the following criteria by which to determine obscenity:

(1) What is the general and dominant theme?
(2) What degree of sincerity of purpose is evident?
(3) What is the literary or scientific worth?
(4) What channels of distribution are employed?
(5) What are contemporary attitudes of reasonable men toward such matters?
(6) What types of readers may reasonably be expected to peruse the publication?
(7) Is there evidence of pornographic intent?
(8) What impression will be created in the mind of the reader, upon reading the work as a whole?[13]

The Commission, in addition, limited itself to condemning only that material which was considered offensive "to persons of balanced mentality."[14]

Following its establishment, the Commission was drawn into a sphere of conflicting praise and criticism. The Commission received support and encouragement from individuals and groups all over the state and nation. Resolutions endorsing the Commission were forthcoming from such organizations as the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs, Georgia Baptist Convention, Georgia Fraternal Society, Southern Baptist Convention, American Legion, and numerous other civic and church groups. In the meantime, certain segments of the population both within and without the state—writers, publishers distributors, and the like, as well as countless laymen—accused the newly-created literature agency of exercising censorship powers in contravention to American democratic principles. Letters soon reached the Commission from all over the United States accusing its members of exercising open and disguised censorship, of by-passing laws, of violating the state and federal constitutions, and of advocating thought control. And, although the Commission had stated at the outset that it had no intention whatsoever of attacking art and the classics, it was accused of attempting to do just that. Many letters foretold of the day in which all the art galleries of Georgia would be divested of much of their great art—mostly nudes. Other letters expressed the fear lest certain passages of the Bible suffer deletion at the hands of the Commissioners.

It was partially due to this barrage of criticism that Dr. Wesberry decided to resign from the Commission during the latter part of 1953. But as the appointed date of his resignation approached, he was urged by interested citizens from all over the state and nation and by Governor Talmadge to remain on the Commission. After several months of serious consideration of the matter, Wesberry acquiesced. He has served as chairman of the Commission since 1953.

The mere fact that the Commission was recognized as the official state agency dealing with obscenity served to command the respect of publishers, distributors, and retailers throughout the state. For this reason, the Com-

13. Minutes of the April 10, 1953 meeting of the Georgia Literature Commission.
14. *Ibid.*

missioners decided that it would be advantageous to utilize this influence by pursuing a program of mutual co-operation with these individuals aimed at securing the voluntary removal of questionable literature from the market. Aware of the fact that these publishers, distributors, and retailers were concerned about the quality of literature being produced and sold in the United States, the Commissioners felt that they would readily endorse this policy since it was not only directed toward suppressing obscene publications but also directed toward maintaining the high standards of the literary profession.

The Commissioners adopted this policy for two main reasons. First, they were of the opinion that the procedure of the Commission as specified in H.B. 247 amounted to a form of prior restraint since it authorized the prohibition of questionable literature from the market in advance of any judicial determination that the material was obscene. Hence, they were afraid that if they became involved in court proceedings the act might be declared unconstitutional. By adhering to a policy of mutual co-operation, the Commissioners hoped to reduce the chances of the act being challenged in court. Second, because it was physically impossible for three commissioners to review every piece of literature being distributed in Georgia's 159 counties, the Commissioners felt that more could be accomplished if the publishers, distributors, and retailers were encouraged to review questionable material themselves and remove it from the market at their own discretion.

The success of this policy of mutual co-operation was immediate and impressive. The publishers and distributors exhibited a willingness to co-operate, and the Commission was very receptive to their suggestions in regard to its program. By June 16, 1953, the Commission had secured the voluntary removal from sale of approximately fifty publications.

In an effort to keep wholesale and retail dealers, solicitors-general, law enforcement officers, and other interested parties informed of its activities, the Commission issues a monthly newsletter containing lists of publications upon which the Commission has received complaints, or has reviewed, or has made a finding of fact. This newsletter, which was first published in 1958, has had the incidental effect of securing the removal from sale of many questionable publications. Since approximately ninety per cent of the nearly two-thousand retail dealers in the state are either druggists or other retailers who have only a secondary interest in the sale of this type of literature, most of them examine the newsletter and take all of their copies of the publications on the list from their shelves.

For a period of three and a half years, the Commissioners pursued this policy of mutual co-operation without a single challenge to their authority. Then, in December 1956, four out-of-state publishers filed suit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia asking for a permanent injunction against the Commission's activities and re-

questing that the 1953 act under which it operated be declared unconstitutional.[15] The District Court ruled in favor of the Commission, and the publishers appealed the case. On January 4, 1957, the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals heard the case and ruled that the 1953 statute was constitutional. Following this decision, the Court of Appeals appointed United States District Judge Boyd Sloan, a member of the tribunal, to continue the hearing in order to determine whether the publishers should be granted injunctive relief against the actions of the Commission. Judge Sloan denied the publishers' request for injunctive relief and dismissed the suit against the Commission on January 21, 1957.

Although the Court of Appeals ruled otherwise, it seems that charges to the effect that the Georgia Literature Commission was exercising extra-legal powers of censorship under the 1953 act were valid, for a close examination of the act will reveal that its provisions enabled the Commission to exercise a form of prior restraint upon publications similar to that which was exercised by a similar commission—the Rhode Island Commission to Encourage Morality in Youth—and which was declared to be unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in the 1957 case of *Bantam Books, Inc. v. Sullivan*.[16] However, it appears that if such a circumstance did exist, it was not intentional. On the occasion of the appointment of the first commissioners in February, 1953, Governor Talmadge had stated: "Censorship in a free country is repugnant to me and had the Commission created under this Act had any authority of censorship, I would have unhesitatingly vetoed it because such would be in contravention of our Constitution and our conception of free minds and free men."[17]
Governor Talmadge insisted that the Commission was no more than a study agency established for the purpose of reviewing questionable literature and recommending prosecution of literature which it determined to be obscene under the state obscenity laws. Insofar as the Commissioners were concerned, it appears that they did not want censorship powers.

Following the legal victory in the United States Court of Appeals, the Commissioners chose once again to return to their policy of mutual co-operation; although, now they proceeded much more aggressively under this policy since there was no longer any doubt on their part as to the constitutionality of the act under which they operated. However, it became evident soon after this ruling that many of the publishers and distributors would no longer voluntarily co-operate with the Commission to the extent that they had done in the past.

Other than H.B. 247, the two most important legislative acts relating to the Georgia Literature Commission have been S.B. 207 and H.B. 131.

15. *News Publ. Corp., Dee Publ. Co., Nugget Magazine, Inc., Mystery Publ. Co. v. James P. Wesberry, as Chairman of th State Literature Commission, Hubert Dyar, as member of the State Literature Commission, and William Boswell, as member of the State Literature Commission.* Civil Action 5794.
16. 372 U. S. 58 (1957).
17. James P. Wesberry, *The Georgia Literature Commission, 1957 Report* (Atlanta: The Georgia Literature Commission, 1957), p. 3.

These two acts were passed as amendments to H.B. 247 for the purpose of providing for reorganization of the Commission and revision of its procedural methods.

While the 1953 act creating the Commission delegated to that body the necessary authority for carrying out its official duties, the failure of that act to provide the agency with a clearly-defined organizational structure and an annual appropriation seriously hampered its activities. The Commission had no central office from which to carry on its business, and it lacked the necessary funds to provide a full-time staff. Due to the fact that the Commissioners were engaged in other occupations and were unable to devote all of their time to Commission business, the initial programs of the Commission were restricted.

Under the provisions of S.B. 207, passed by the General Assembly during the 1958 session, this situation was improved greatly. This act provided for the appointment of a full-time executive secretary and the employment of such other personnel as the Commission deemed necessary. Whereas under the provisions of the 1953 act the Commission could hold no more than thirty meetings per year, the 1958 act authorized it to hold sixty meetings per year. Insofar as the legal capacity of the Commission was concerned, the act made three major changes. First, it gave the Commission broader and more direct authority over the distribution and sale of obscene literature by conferring upon it power to initiate direct injunctive action to halt the sale and distribution of such literature. Second, it amended the 1953 act by providing that the final determination of the obscenity of questionable literature was to be placed within the hands of the courts, thus removing any direct power of censorship from the Commission. Third, the amended law enabled the Commission to issue subpoenas for the purpose of compelling testimony at its hearings. The 1958 act revised the definition of obscenity as incorporated in the 1953 act to comply with the definition set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *Roth v. United States.*

Although the General Assembly had already provided for an effective prosecution of individuals who disseminated obscene literature, some of the legislators, nevertheless, soon realized the need for legislation to enable the Commission to get at the literature itself. H.B.131, which was enacted during the 1963 session of the state legislature, provided a most effective solution to this problem by establishing an *in rem* proceeding against questionable literature.

In February of 1965, Senator John Gayner of the Fifth District launched a fiery attack upon the Commission in the General Assembly as a result of a request submitted by that agency for an increase of five thousand dollars in its annual budget which had heretofore been fifteen thousand dollars. Senator Gayner, who had opposed the Commission for quite some time prior to the 1965 session on the grounds that it was an unnecessary and unconstitutional agency, was determined not only to block this request

for additional funds but to cut off the entire budget of the Commission. His proposal failed, however, when he was unable to get a majority vote in a meeting of the Appropriations Committee, which was considering the budget request. Unwilling to give up, Senator Gaynor introduced a separate bill in the Senate which would have abolished the Commission outright, but the measure met defeat in the Senate Judiciary Committee. In a follow-up move, the senator proposed a substitute bill aimed at abolishing the Commission's injunctive powers. Once again, he failed, and the Georgia Literature Commission had won its second major fight for survival. The champion of the Commission's cause in the Senate had been Senator R. Eugene Holley of the Twenty-second District, who argued that the state of Georgia not only needed the Commission but that the General Assembly should grant the Commission additional powers to enable it to do a more effective job.

The Commission in Action

While holding its legal weapons in reserve, the Commission has pursued a two-point program aimed at the suppression of obscene literature. First, as was noted above, the Commission has sought to enlist the voluntary co-operation of wholesale and retail dealers in removing questionable literature from the market. Second, through programs of community action, the Commission has attempted to educate the public as to the "inherent evils" of obscene literature in order that the people themselves might take an active part in the campaign against it.

Although no data is available to substantiate such a claim, it may be inferred that the policy of mutual co-operation has been the Commission's most effective method of combating obscene literature. It is true that many wholesalers and retailers are more-or-less forced to co-operate with the Commission out of fear of the legal sanctions which the Commission could possibly invoke against them. But, through the years the Commissioners have enjoyed a rather warm working relationship with the majority of the wholesale and retail dealers operating within the state, and a spirit of friendly co-operation has prevailed between these parties. Since neither the dealers nor the Commissioners wish to become involved in extensive legal proceedings, they have both come to rely upon this policy for the sake of expediency. To date, the greatest success experienced by the Commission with this policy was in 1964. During that year, the Commission reviewed 427 different pieces of material, ranging from motion pictures to magazines and books (both hard cover and paperback). Records and correspondence in the files of the Commission indicate that it was able to secure voluntary removal from sale of over forty per cent of this material.

The Literature Commission has found it necessary to take legal action in only six instances. It has secured declaratory judgments against four

publications and obtained injunctions against the sale of two others. In 1958, the Commission secured injunctions restraining the sale of two paperback books which had been previously determined by that agency to be obscene. The books were *Turbulent Daughters*[18] and *Rambling Maids*.[19] Both the injunctions were granted by the DeKalb Superior Court. In January, 1965, the Commission obtained a declaratory judgment in Chatham Superior Court that a paperback book entitled *Strip Artist*[20] was obscene. During the latter part of August, 1965, the Commission filed an action in Muscoge Superior Court to obtain a declaratory judgment that the paperback book *Sin Whisper*[21] was obscene; and, in September of that year, declaratory relief was granted against the publication. Following this decision, the publishers of the book, Corinth Publications, Inc., of San Diego, California, appealed the case to the Georgia Supreme Court. In an unanimous decision announced on March 31, 1966, that court upheld the ruling of the Muscogee Superior Court.[22] On June 13, 1966, the publishers filed a petition for a writ of certiorari in the United States Supreme Court. To date, the Court has not acted on this petition. In March, 1966, Chatham Superior Court granted the Commission declaratory relief against two more paperback books: *Campus Lust*[23] and *Lust Avenger*.[24]

The Commission has found that individual action at the local community level is essential in coping with obscene literature. Dr. Wesberry has pointed out that individual action at the local community level is not only essential but that in many instances it can be the decisive factor in regard to the suppression of this material. For this reason, the Commission has in the past provided leadership and encouragement to local community action programs designed to mobilize the citizens of the particular community against local dealers handling obscene merchandise for the purpose of persuading these dealers to remove this merchandise from sale. These local anti-obscenity campaigns are always initiated by local organizations with the Commission serving in an advisory capacity.

The Commission has been active in community action programs in several cities throughout the state, including—to name only a few—Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Columbus, Macon, Savannah, and Valdosta. Since around 1958, the Commissioners have held a number of public hearings in various parts of the state designed to call attention to the state-wide problem of obscene literature. At these hearings the Commissioners receive complaints on publications from private individuals and attempt to rally the support of the local citizenry and enlist the voluntary co-operation of local retailers. Although most of these public hearings have been held at

18. HAYES, TURBULENT DAUGHTERS (Saber Books, 1958).
19. SHORT, RAMBLING MAIDS (Fabian Books, 1958).
20. SMITH, STRIP ARTIST (Neva Paperbacks, Inc., 1964).
21. MARSHALL, SIN WHISPER (Corinth Publications, Inc., 1965).
22. Corinth Publications, Inc. v. Wesberry, 221 Ga. 704 (1966).
23. SWAN, CAMPUS LUST (Neva Paperbacks, Inc., 1965).
24. DEXTER, LUST AVENGER (Leisure Books, 1965).

the request of local citizens' groups, they have not necessarily been part of locally-organized anti-obscenity programs.

The success experienced by the Georgia Literature Commission in its campaign against obscene literature has prompted the establishment of similar agencies in Massachusetts, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island. Several cities—most notably Detroit, Michigan and St. Cloud, Minnesota—have established local literature commissions which pursue policies of mutual co-operation with local distributors and sometimes bring suit in the courts. It is significant to note that the Georgia Literature Commission has served as a model for the organization of many of these commissions.