

Written by Genevieve M. Williams  
Librarian

1931

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H I S T O R Y  
O F T H E  
H U N T I N G B U R G P U B L I C L I B R A R Y .

At the request of the publicity Committee of the Indiana Library Association, all librarians in the state have prepared histories of their respective libraries, submitting data to the committee, sufficient to furnish an adequate account of the organization and establishment of each library, together with its subsequent growth and its present condition.

In compliance with the request of the Committee, Miss Genevieve M. Williams, librarian of the local library, has compiled a comprehensive history of the Huntingburg Public Library, and, as requested, is submitting it to the local press for publication, and is forwarding an official copy, together with the press clippings, to the district chairman of the committee, Miss Minta Stone, librarian of the Bedford Public Library.

For source material, the files of the local papers of the year 1922 were searched, library records, as preserved in the secretary's reports of Library board meetings, were examined, and personal knowledge of the organization of the movement was drawn upon by the narrator.

This sketch of the library should be of interest to all citizens, since it is the history of a local civic institution, which belongs wholly to the people, is supported by them, and renders service to all.

The Huntingburg Public Library, the first public library to be established in Dubois County, was officially created on Monday, April 24, 1922, when members of the first library board were legally sworn into office by the proper authorities. It was not until two months later, however on July 29, 1922 that the library itself began to function. on that date, nine years ago, the library opened its doors and began its work as one of the educational agencies of huntingburg. before that time, Dubois County had been listed as one of the three remaining black sheep among the ninety-two counties of Indiana without a public library. After that date, Pike County on the west and Crawford County on the east, were the two counties still outside the library fold. but in 1923 a public library was established at Petersburg, Pike County, leaving Crawford County the last and only County in Indiana without a public library.

Compared with a number of the neighboring libraries in southern Indiana, the local library is a mere youth. A casual glance around the vicinity reveals the fact that the library at Seymour is twenty seven years old; Salem, twenty-eight; Mt. Vernon, twenty-nine; Poseyville, thirty-three; Bedford, thirty-four; Cannelton, forty-one, Vincennes, forty-two; New Albany, forty-seven; Terre Haute, forty-nine; Princeton, fifty; Evansville (Willard) fifty-five and New Harmony, the dean of all Indiana libraries-ninety-three years old. If written in detail, the histories of some of these older libraries would fill volumes, reflecting as doubtless they would reflect, the early life and times, as well as the later development of their respective communities.

because of its comparative youth, the history of the

Huntingburg library, is lacking in picturesque details of the early days in Huntingburg and vicinity; but because of that same youth, it has been possible to incorporate into this sketch details connected with the organization and establishment of the local library, which, in the case of older ones, may have gone unrecorded, or may have been forgotten, and, hence, at this time were impossible to secure by present day narrators of the sketches.

The idea of a public library for Huntingburg had its inception in the minds of a few people about the year 1915; but, because of the activity of these same persons in preparing for the approaching Dubois County observance of Indiana's Centennial Celebration in September, 1916, which celebration was staged in Huntingburg, the library idea was set aside, and not revived until the early part of 1922. In the meantime, Ed. H. Dufendach, editor of the Huntingburg Independent, and a strong supporter of the library idea died. Among those who were active in re-awakening an interest in the movement were A. L. Gray, City attorney, Louis Wagner, mayor, G. W. Pickhardt, editor of the Huntingburg Signal, and Genevieve M. Williams, associate editor.

We read of the result of this renewed activity from the files of the Huntingburg Independent, in the issue of April 8, 1922:

"A definite movement has been started by the citizens of Huntingburg within the last few weeks, for the establishment of a public library in Huntingburg - the result of a sentiment which has been developing gradually among our citizens for several years.

A few weeks ago an informal meeting was held of persons interested in the library proposition, and after a thorough

discussion of the Indiana library law, it was decided to give Huntingburg citizens an explanation of this law. This work was entrusted to Miss Genevieve Williams and within the last two weeks, she has seen more than one hundred citizens, who, when personally interviewed, have expressed their hearty approval and endorsement of the movement.

Miss Williams is unable to see each citizen individually, because of lack of time; hence, she is desirous of interesting everyone through the use of the local papers. If, after the following exposition of the library law, the manner of securing a public library is not clear, Miss Williams will gladly explain the method to any one who will call upon her". Thereafter, followed an extract from the library law of Indiana setting forth the methods by which a community can secure a public library.

Those interested in the movement in Huntingburg had chosen the plan, whereby the citizens take the initiative, and by donating the necessary amount make the tax mandatory. In the case of Huntingburg, the amount to be raised was \$1076.26. The work of preliminary subscription campaign was finished on Saturday, April 15, and on Monday, April 17, 1922 the list, bearing the names of ninety-nine subscribers, was taken to the county seat at Jasper, and filed in the office of the County Clerk, Charles Bartley. Thus was taken the first legal step in the establishment of a public library in Huntingburg.

That the initial movement for the establishment of a public library in Huntingburg was attracting more than local attention, was indicated by communications from several persons, prominent in Indiana library and legislative fields.

Comment on the movement by the local press during the

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first week in April, attracted the attention of W. H. Hamilton,  
of Indianapolis, at that time Director of the Public Library Com-  
mission of Indiana. In the issue of the Huntingburg Signal,  
April 21, 1922, the following letter was published written by  
Mr. Hamilton to E. W. Pickhardt, editor of the Signal:

"A clipping from the Signal of April 7 has just reached  
us, containing the article on the Huntingburg Library. We  
are keenly interested and trust it will be but a short time  
before the library will be giving service to your town. I  
was especially impressed with your sentence stating that a  
library does not necessarily mean a library building. It has  
reference to the real library - the books, necessary equipment,  
etc. - the kernel, not the outer shell. We wish that more of  
our small communities might realize that the service is the  
important thing, and not the building. If the Public Library  
Commission can be of any help to you in pushing this matter,  
please let us know."

In the Signal, issue of April 28, 1922 an item from  
Indianapolis, dated April 20, reads: "Only two counties in  
Indiana - Crawford and Pike - are without libraries at the  
present time, according to William J. Hamilton, secretary of  
the Public Library Commission of Indiana. Dubois County  
obtained its first library last week, he said. It is located  
in Huntingburg."

In the same issue of the Signal, April 28, 1922, appeared  
a letter, written to Mr. Pickhardt by Mr. J. C. Dunn, of  
Indianapolis, now deceased, a man outstanding in the state for  
his prominence in library and historical work in Indiana. Mr.  
Pickhardt's friendship with Mr. Dunn dated from the time the  
former was a member of the Indiana State Legislatures - 1889 and

1891. Mr. Dunn fought many a battle with the legislative powers of the state to secure the passage of progressive library laws for Indiana. Mr. Dunn wrote:-

"My dear Mr. Pickhardt;

Your favor of the 23rd recalls the days when you were a member of the great reform legislatures of 1889 and 1891, and I was State Librarian. You may remember that I offended some sensitive members by a somewhat zealous advocacy of township libraries, and a movement was started to dispense with my services. I remember that you were one of those who saved me from official decapitation.

I was a member of the Public Library Commission from the start, and served for twenty years. We adopted a goal of at least one free public library for every county in Indiana. Dubois County has been a hard nut to crack. I did everything I could think of to get it started, but without avail; until now comes a woman who does the job. I wonder if the people of Dubois County realize what she has done for them. Let me whisper it to you: She has saved the county from being a "tail-ender" in progress. There are only two other counties left that have not joined the procession - Crawford and Pike. I see that it is proposed to name the library for Genevieve Williams. It would be recognition of a just debt. The next generation will have a statue of her placed in the building.

I cannot tell how gratified I am over your library movement. I only hope that you may get started off right. There is more in that than most people imagine. Call in the Public Library Commission in every time of trouble, and also when it looks like plain sailing. The Commission is here to help new libraries. You will need skilled aid from the start. For instance, in your book shower, you will get a lot of junk. That is an in-

variable rule. But it is not everybody who knows what junk is. I have known people to sell books, pamphlets, old papers, etc., for a cent a pound, that were worth ten dollars a pound. This is especially true as to material for local history. You have to get that from home - you cannot buy it in New York.

In regard to the utility of the library, you can throw every other consideration aside and urge its benefit to the children alone. I have just been reading a statement by one of our officials of the difficulty of education in Haiti: "While they learn to read in school, returning home to a complete dearth of literature, they very soon forget. But even if they did not forget, what a folly for Indiana to spend over \$20,000,000 a year in teaching children how to read and then to give them nothing to read. Give the kiddies a chance, and not only the children of well-to-do parents, but every future voter of your vicinity. As Sam Jones said of religion, "Put your fodder on the ground, where everything can get it, from a giraffe to a billy-goat."

In the fall of 1891, I talked to the State teachers' Association on the library question and quoted from George Hardy of New York: "It is by providing generous opportunities for the reading of the best books and teaching the children to read them properly, that I believe the grave problem of moral education in our public schools can be solved." The longer I live, the more certain I am that this is true. No father or mother can afford to overlook it.

Sincerely yours,  
J. C. Dunn.

A few days after the filing of the subscription lists with the county clerk, appointments were made for the creation of the

library board. Judge John H. Dillon, of Jasper, judge of the Circuit Court, named three members. J. W. Finke, (term;lyr.), Louis H. C. Wagner, (term 2 yrs.), Genevieve M. Williams, (term, 3 yrs.). The City Council of Huntingburg named two members: J. V. Stimson (term, 1 yr.) Mrs. Lula M. Lukemeyer, (term, 1 yr.). The City Board of Education named two members: Mrs. Ed. H. Dufendach (term, 2 yrs.), W. E. Menke (term 2 yrs.)

At twelve thirty o'clock P.M., on Monday, April 24, 1922 the seven newly appointed members of the Library Board, who had received their legal certificates of appointment from the respective appointing bodies, were driven by J. V. Stimson to the County Seat of Jasper, eight miles distant, where Chas. H. Bartley, Clerk of the Circuit Court, administered the oath of office. Immediately thereafter, on the east steps of the Court House, an official picture of the Board was taken by Alois Sprauer of Jasper, a copy of which was placed in the archives of the Library.

The Board members immediately re-entered the Court House, and held their first meeting, in the reception room of the Court Chamber, for the purpose of organization. Louis Wagner was chosen president, Mrs. Lula Lukemeyer, vice-president and Genevieve M. Williams, secretary.

It had required active work to complete the necessary preliminaries; incident to the legal creation of the Library Board on April 24, but there was a special reason for desiring this date to mark the official beginning of library work in Huntingburg.

On February 24, 1922 just two months before, Gov. Warren G. Mc Cray of Indiana had issued the following proclamation, designating the week of April 23-29 as Indiana Library Week, the first of that kind in the state.

20 to  
 1922

"Whereas, To spread the influence of good books is not simply a missionary work for human betterment, but a patriotic work in disseminating the principles in which democracy finds support and strength", and

"Whereas, Today, as never before, the well being of our state and the progress of our communities depend upon the vigor and effectiveness of our educational institutions, our public libraries as well as our schools, and

"Whereas, The public library in Indiana and elsewhere has proven itself one of the most valuable social, spiritual and practical forces in the life of any community, by fostering reflection, ideals and progress, and by stimulating the reading and assimilation of the best in books, the treasure chests of human aspiration and knowledge.

"Therefore, in order that the citizens of Indiana may come to recognize more fully the value of books, reading and libraries, and that they may become more familiar with the advantages and needs of the public libraries in their own communities,

By virtue of my authority as governor of the State of Indiana, I, Warren T. Mc Cray, do now designate the week of April 23-29, 1922 as Indiana Library Week, and do urge the observance of this week in all parts of the State. I especially recommend that the trustees of public libraries, librarians, teachers, and clergymen, do their utmost to reach all in each community with the message and influence of good books.

(Signed) Warren T. Mc Cray

The State House.

Governor of Indiana.

February 24, 1922.

Indianapolis, Indiana.

It became the earnest hope of those interested, that

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Huntingburg might be able to celebrate this week as the birth-week of a public library in the community. To that end, efforts were put forth for the legal creation of the Library Board on Monday, April 24, so that the remainder of the week might be given over to the promotion of active steps toward securing co-operation in awakening library interest in the schools and throughout the city.

With the hearty support of the local press, the teachers and pupils of the public schools, and the ministers and churches of the city, enthusiastic interest in the library movement <sup>was</sup> engendered. During the week, story hours were conducted in the grades, and speakers from the city addressed the high school and grade students on various phases of library work. Plans were formulated for conducting a book shower in the schools and throughout the entire city.

Arrangements were made to close the week of activity with a public meeting at the City Hall on Sunday afternoon April 30, when W. J. Hamilton, of Indianapolis, secretary of the Public Library Commission would address the gathering. On April 26, Mayor Louis Wagner issued a proclamation, designating Sunday, April 30, as Library Day in Huntingburg and urged ministers on that day, to use appropriate themes for their sermons, individuals to read some inspiring piece of literature, or to discuss the library project, and as many as possible, to be present at the special meeting at the City Hall.

Mr. Hamilton arrived in Huntingburg at 11:30 o'clock, Sunday morning April 30, and was met at the station and escorted to the Ideal Hotel by a reception committee, composed of the following citizens: Mayor Louis C. Wagner, A. L. Gray, H. C. Kothert, E. W. Pickhardt, J. V. Stimson, E. B. Fish, C. Kornrumpf, F. G. Katterhenry, and H. W. A. Hemmer.

A. L. Gray, city attorney, presided at the public meeting held at 2:00 o'clock Sunday afternoon, at the City Hall on Geiger Street.

Wilbur Protsman, high school principal, and Miss Anna Behrens and Miss Mildred Katterhenry, (now Mrs Clyde Henke of Milwaukee, Wisc.) members of the high school faculty had superintended the work of decorating, with flags and flowers, the stage upon which members of the newly appointed Library Board, members of the City Council and of the Board of Education and the reception committee were seated.

Jacob Blessinger, Ed Bolin, I. R. Muppy, and John Barklet, of the City Council, and Frank G. Katterhenry, president of the Board of Education, Henry Summers, secretary and E. F. Steinkamp, treasurer, were members of two of the official appointing bodies president.

Mr. Hamilton made a splendid address on the Subject, "The Public Library, an asset to the Community." Following the address Mr. A. L. Gray, in a pleasing presentation speech, introduced the new members of the Library Board to the audience, who received them most cordially.

The following is the complete program for the afternoon:

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|----------------|--|
| Music          | Philharmonic Orchestra<br>O. F. Koenig, director                                 |
| "America"      | Ensemble   |
| Invocation     | Rev. C. P. Mc Kinney,<br>pastor of Trinity M.E.Church.                           |
| Male Quartette | Albert Partenheimer, Walter<br>Reutepohler, Edwin Schwartz<br>and Ben Feldmeyer. |
| Reading        | "When My Ship Comes In"<br>Mrs Cecil Blemker.                                    |
| Address        | "The Public Library, an<br>asset to the Community"<br>Mr. W. J. Hamilton.        |

Introduction of Huntingburg Public Library Board.  
City Atty. A.L. Gray.

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Response

Louis Wagner,  
president Library Board.

Informal talks by Citizens.

"Indiana"

"Hymn to Indiana"

Song

- Miessner

- Langdon

High School Alumni Chorus

Music

Philharmonic Orchestra

Benediction

Dr. R. R. Filbrandt.

Immediately following the close of the meeting, Mr. Hamilton, after posing in front of the City Hall for a picture with members of the Library Board, City Council, Board of Education and the Reception Committee, held an informal meeting on the City Hall Stage with members of the Library Board.

Following the impetus given to the library movement during Indiana Library Week, those in charge settled down to the business of organizing details, and bringing to a successful conclusion plans begun during the week for conducting the book shower, and assembling necessary equipment for operating the library.

Through the united efforts of the school organization and committees of citizens in the churches and civic organizations, the book shower was finished on Monday, May 29, and on Wednesday, May 31, Miss Mayme Snipes, of Indianapolis, of the State Library Commission, arrived to organize the library for service. The task of organization was stupendous - that of sorting, discarding, classifying, cataloguing, and preparing for circulation the fifteen hundred books secured in the book shower, but with the help of many willing volunteer workers, young and old, the work was at last completed and things were in readiness to open the library to the public on June 29, 1922.

Meanwhile, during the month of May, the Library Board had held five meetings, during which several important questions were

discussed and settled.

The first meeting was held at 8:00 o'clock, on Friday evening, May 5, in the Directors' room of the First National Bank, corner Fourth and Main streets. All members were present except J. V. Stimson, who was absent from the city. At this meeting, a code of by-laws, recommended by the Public Library Commission of Indiana was adopted, and a resolution passed to offer the use of the library to citizens of Patoka township, under conditions provided by the Indiana State library law. This offer was accepted at the August meeting of the Township Advisory Board, and the necessary tax levy was made for the support of the library. At this first meeting the Board accepted an invitation from Miss Emma B. Phillips, librarian of the Tell City library, to attend a District Library meeting at Tell City on May 18. It was there that the Board, with a perfect membership attendance, was initiated into the warm fellowship of the library fraternity. At this meeting standing committees were appointed for the year, and the second Monday night of each month was the time set for the regular meeting of the board; subsequently, the time was changed to the first Thursday night of each month.

Other Board meetings of the month were held on May 10, 13, 17 and 23, and the problems of selecting a place for the library and the appointment of a librarian were settled. At the meeting on May 17, the Board chose for the library two large rooms adjoining the Phoenix Hotel on Fifth and Van Buren streets, formerly used as sample rooms by the hotel and owned by J. W. Schwartz. The library is still housed in these quarters. On May 23, Miss Genevieve M. Williams, a former teacher in the Huntingburg High School was selected as librarian, and is still serving in that capacity.

At two o'clock, on Thursday afternoon, June 29, 1922, the

Huntingburg Public Library was informally opened to the public for the circulation of books. A number of volunteer workers assisted the librarian in the work of registration, and in the selection and discharging of books.

The two large well lighted library rooms had been made comfortable and attractive by donations of chairs, tables and other necessary equipment. There were about twelve hundred volumes salvaged from the book shower, and three hundred loaned by the Public Library Commission. With these, the library began business.

The first tax levy for the support of the library was made in September, 1922, by the City of Huntingburg and Patoka township, but no funds from this source were available until June, 1923. Meanwhile, by practicing rigid economy, the library met promptly its financial obligations for the first year. Payments collected on the subscription pledges, and additional donations of money from individuals and organizations tided over the first twelve months. Among the organizations making substantial contributions to the library, were the Huntingburg Chautauque Association, the Betsy Ross Circle, Huntingburg Music Club and Semper Paratus Club.

During seven weeks of the summer of 1924, the librarian attended the summer school for librarians, held at Indianapolis, under the direction of the Public Library Commission of Indiana. Mrs. Ed. H. Dufendach acted as librarian during this period.

During the nine years of its existence, in addition to the gifts made during the book Shower, the Huntingburg Public Library has been the recipient, at various times, of several noteworthy gifts of books and trophies.

In January 1923, the first of these gifts came from Mrs. Nancy Mc Mahan Jones, of New Rochelle, N.Y., a native of Huntingburg. Upon the death of her husband, Dr. John W. Jones,

an eminent divine in the Methodist Episcopal church. Mrs. Jones presented to the library a part of her husband's valuable collection of books. This gift of three hundred books consisted of reference works, history, literature, travel and theology.

In August, 1925, a second large gift came from another former citizen, Col. C. C. Schreeder of Evansville, a charter member of Shiveley Post No. 68, G.A.R of Huntingburg, and formerly postmaster, and editor of the huntingburg Argus. Col. Schreeder, now deceased, was widely read and travelled. He had been active politically in local and state affairs, and was a prominent figure in G.A.R. local, state, and national organizations. Included in his gift of five-hundred books, were many of value, especially from the point of view of the collector and historian. Rare out-of-print books by Indiana writers and a splendid collection which the library was beginning.

During this same month of August, 1925, announcement was made by the librarian that the effects of Shiveley Post No. 68 G. A. R., which had passed out of existence on June 26, 1925, had been turned over to the library by Commander Fred H. Poetker. These effects consisted of the official records of the Post, dating from the time of its organization, June 2, 1882, to the day of its last meeting and disbandment, June 26, 1925 - the description book, containing the roll of members, adjutant's records, framed charter, picture and sword of Captain Lewis Byron Shiveley, for whom the Post was named, the Post flag and several Civil war guns and knapsacks.

Several months later, another addition was made to the Civil war collection by Corporal John S. Brademeyer, a civil war veteran of Shiveley Post, who presented to the library his interesting collection of Indian and Civil war relics.

In August, 1926, Mr. Leo. H. Fisher, a prominent attorney

of Huntingburg, whose father, Captain Mormon Fisher was a ~~Charge~~ member of Shiveley Post, G.A.R. presented to the library a valuable gift of reference books the greater part of which relates to Civil War subjects. An eight volume set of Civil War records of Indiana, the report of Adjutant General Serrall of Indiana; a complete set of the official records of the Union and Confederate navies, in the War of the Rebellion, and a ten volume set of the letters and messages of the Presidents of the United States from Washington to McKinley, compose the major part of the collection.

Upon the death of Dr. E. E. Genglebach, a well known physician of Huntingburg, Mrs. Genglebach donated to the library fifty books from her husband's library, consisting of history, fiction and reference works in the <sup>field</sup> of medicine.

Judged from the standpoint of publications of local writers, the Huntingburg Public Library has a unique and noteworthy collection. It is the result of years of work on the part of a native born former citizen of Huntingburg - Mr. Otto A. Rothert, of Louisville, Kentucky, who for many years has been secretary of the famous historical Filson Club of Louisville, and a well known writer in the field of Kentucky history. Mr. Rothert started the collection in the name of his young nephew, Matthew Rothert, now grown to manhood, a son of Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Rothert, former citizens of Huntingburg.

In 1929, the Rotherts, uncle and nephew, presented to the local library these publications, under the name "The Matthew Rothert Dubois County Writers' Collection." This contribution is of inestimable value to the library, in its preservation of material connected with the local history of the community, as well as in its collection of publications on foreign subjects by former Dubois County citizens. The collection consists of about sixty books, numerous pamphlets, magazine articles, and

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and musical compositions by Dubois County authors, and a complete file of the correspondence conducted by Mr. Rothert while assembling the material.

In 1929, Mr. A. L. Gray, of Hollywood, Florida, a former citizen of Huntingburg, presented to the library a collection of seventy-five books, including fiction, history, economics and reference books in the field of Indiana law.

In August 1930, Grace and Raymond Rush, of Indianapolis, former residents of Huntingburg, presented to the library a splendid gift of three hundred books. The collection, which for the most part is made up of well bound editions of the classical writers, fiction, history, essays and biography, was given to the library as a memorial to the father of the donors, R. C. Rush, a former citizen of Huntingburg.

On November 20, 1926 final negotiations were completed for the purchase of a site for a library building. The most desirable lot in the city for a structure of that kind, situated on the corner of Fifth and Jackson streets, was purchased from the heirs of one of Huntingburg's pioneer families - Jacob Fromm. It is a beautifully shaded corner lot 131 x 153 feet, upon which still stands the old home, reconditioned by the Library Board, and used as rental property, pending the erection of a library building.

Since the organization of the Library in April 1922, the following persons have served on the Library Board:

Louis Wagner, April 1922 (still serving)  
J. W. Finke, April 1922 (still serving)  
W. E. Menke, April 1922 (still serving)  
Mrs. Ed. H. Dufendach, April, 1922 (still serving)  
Genevieve M. Williams, April, 1922 (still serving)  
J. V. Stimson, April 1922, - November 1925.

Mrs. Louis G. Lukemeyer, pril 1922-April 1929.

Mrs. W. E. Ellsworth, April 1929 - (still serving)

H. W. A. Hammer, April 1929 - (still serving)

The city of Huntingburg and Patoka township, which com-  
<sup>prise</sup> ~~prise~~ the area served by the local library, have a combined  
 population of 4,396. At the close of the first fiscal year,  
 June, 1923, there were 790 borrowers enrolled; at the close of  
 the present fiscal year, June, 1931, there were 1322 borrowers.  
 Circulation figures for the first year reported 15,070 books  
 borrowed; for the last year, 20,160 books. During the nine  
 years, since the opening of the library, 145,463 books were  
 in circulation, an average of 16,163 books yearly.

In June, 1923, the library had 1028 books, and was receiv-  
 ing, regularly, five periodicals; in June 1931, the library had  
 5,210 books and receives 24 periodicals and newspapers.

Total area served in	1923 -	4,396
" " " "	1931 -	5,222
Circulation	1923 -	15,070
" " " "	1931 -	20,160
no of borrowers	1923 -	790
" " " "	1931 -	1,322
Books in library	1923 -	1,028 - books
" " " "	1931 -	5,210 -

5222  
 4396  
 826