

## DELPHI LIBRARY HISTORY

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It was probably about 1889 that the Saturday Evening Club, a literary club, began talking about a public library in Delphi. Then in November, 1896, the Oracle Club, an outgrowth of the Saturday Evening Club, was organized, primarily for the purpose of establishing a public library. The members must have been busy and also persuasive because when the notice to taxpayers of the tax rates for taxes to be collected in 1897 was issued in the January 30, 1897 newspaper it contained a 2¢ rate on the \$100 for a library fund.

In the March 6, 1897 issue of the Citizen an article states that a Mr. M.A. Ryan, an attorney had secured the room formerly occupied by the Wallace Barber Shop and was fitting it up for a library. But the room must never have been used or if so for only a short time. In May, 1897 the Oracle Club announced a "Book Reception" to be held in the lecture room of the Presbyterian Church for May 15, 1897. The honorable John L. Griffith of Indianapolis had been invited to give a lecture on "Books and Reading", the price of admission to be a book. One hundred fifty books were collected.

The Oracle Club then suggested that the school board take charge of the books and organize a public library. Older people in Delphi remember that collection. They say it was at the top of the stairs in the assembly room of the high school building. Miss Emma Myers was the librarian. With the help of Miss Hoagland from the State Library, and after taking special courses in library science, she accessioned, classified and catalogued the collection. An article in an August, 1897,

Citizen stated that over 150 new books had been placed in the library.

The library tax rate was 2¢ on the \$100 in each of 1898, 1899, and 1900, 5¢ in 1901 and 3¢ in 1902 and 1903.

March 25, 1898, under the auspices of the Oracle Club, Dr. C. A. Waldron gave his popular lecture with stereoptican views on the "Passion" Play" at the Baptist Church, the proceeds to be given to the public library. The price of admission was 25¢ and 15¢.

Early in 1904 Miss Marcia Hoagland came to Delphi from the State Library to talk to the library minded people about organizing a public library under the state library law. In April, 1904 a library board was selected, three by the Judge of Carroll Circuit Court, Dr. Frank H. Robinson, Mr. James P. Wason and Miss Mary Alice Dodge, two by the School Trustees of the City of Delphi, Mrs. Mary C. Howe and Mr. Charles Harley and two by the Delphi City Council, Mr. James Obear and Mrs. John H. Burr. The school board already felt that Delphi should have a public library controlled by their own board and they immediately tendered the books to the new library board.

But the location of the library in the school building was not too satisfactory. People could not use the library except during school hours. The board and the city council began talking about a building to house the library collection. In June, 1904, the city council passed a resolution appropriating \$2,000 for the purchase of a library site. In the meantime Carnegie was giving money away to build libraries. Mrs. Mary Howe wrote to him asking if there was any chance that Delphi could have a Carnegie library.

In October of 1904 the board rented a room in the back of the Bowen Bank Building, which stood where the Carroll Telephone office now stands, and the collection was moved from the school to that building December 5th. Open hours were from 12:30 to 9:30 P.M.

Early in 1905 Mrs. Howe received a letter from the Carnegie Foundation stating that if Delphi would furnish a suitable location and would furnish \$1,000 a year to maintain and operate the library, Mr. Carnegie would give \$10,000 to construct a building. The council had already appropriated the \$2,000 to buy the location and the levy set on the 1904 evaluation to be collected in 1905 was 8¢ which should bring in about \$1,100.

The library board accepted the offer January 10, 1905 and passed a resolution that a sum of not less than \$1,000 a year be raised by a tax levy to maintain the library. There was, of course, a lot of discussion and considerable dissension. Some thought it was too much of a burden to impose upon future generations. One man said it was like going up in a balloon and having to walk back.

Other cities were having their problems. Carnegie had offered Frankfort \$17,500 for a library if they would furnish the site and \$1,750 a year for maintenance. The school board seemed favorable toward the proposition but the city council turned it down flat. Monticello at this time wanted their citizens to donate a library to the city. Many thought that was a better plan than to burden their future generations with an imposed tax levy.

There were three sites under consideration for the Delphi Library, the one where the library now stands at the corner of Main and Indiana Streets, one on the corner of Indiana and Front Streets, and one on the corner of Washington and Front where the American Legion Hall now stands. Lot no. 21, 60 feet by 120 feet, belonging to Albert H. Barnes, on the corner of Indiana and Main was by far the best location and the council was able to buy an additional ten feet to the West of it making a good sized lot with a seventy foot frontage.

Architect C.E. Kendrick of Fort Wayne was contracted to draw up

plans for the library, his fee to be two and a half per cent of the cost of the building but if the cost of the building exceeded \$10,000 he would receive nothing. Bids were received July 21st, 1905 for the construction of the building and the W. C. Halstead & Co. bid of Indianapolis was accepted. It was for \$8,050 for the building alone. Work was started in July, 1905 and the corner stone was laid September 1, 1905. A copper box contained copies of the current newspapers, programs, pictures, a list of city and county officials, samples of grain, and various articles relevant to the religious, social, political and industrial life of that period.

During the winter of 1905 and 1906 there was flurry of entertainments and money making schemes. The Oracle Club was still very active. One article in the paper tells of them giving \$25 to buy books; another tells of an International Dictionary being placed in the library by them. In March, 1905, a Reverend Grant had been procured for a lecture in the Baptist Church. School children all over town were selling tickets. The Dramatic Club gave a play at the Armory, the proceeds to help buy furniture. They bought the circulation desk which is still being used. The school children under the tutelage of Miss Viola Murphy, music instructor of the schools put on an entertainment which netted \$40. That bought the table and chairs in the children's area. The ladies of the missionary Circle had a colonial tea in the auditorium of the library to receive their lady and gentlemen friends. A liberal offering was solicited. Their goal was to buy a table for the library.

The library was finished and dedicated June 19, 1906. Halstead had been paid \$8,347 for the construction of the building, Barnett and Mohr, \$878 and \$219.90 for heating and plumbing respectively, Wilson \$157.50 for wiring, Charles Kendricks \$250 for planning and G. W. Brewer \$150 for superintending the work. At that time 50 other Carnegie

libraries had been built in Indiana. Rensselaer got a new Carnegie Library the same year costing \$12,000.

It was estimated at the time the library board was formed and took over the collection in 1904 that there were 2500 volumes valued at \$1,000 in the library. The secretary's minutes and articles in the papers show that sums of \$10 and \$25 were spent from time to time for books.

A librarian's report we have for 1905 shows a collection of 2737 volumes (of this number 287 were bound magazines and 627 were government documents). During that year 231 volumes were added (59 by purchase and 91 by gift, 71 documents and 10 magazines in binders). No books were lost and none found missing. Two books were worn out and one destroyed because infected by scarlet fever. Registration was 876 and circulation was 6,953. The annual report of 1906 states that there was one registration for every three persons in Delphi. The annual report for 1910 showed the collection at 3,214 volumes, 157 purchased that year and 10 by gift. Income from the city of Delphi was \$1,000, the circulation 6,802 and the number registered 1,279. The librarian's salary was \$312 and the assistant's \$32.40. Tax rates varied for the next fifteen years, going from 5¢ to 10¢ for Delphi and from 1¢ to 5¢ for Deer Creek Township which had asked for library service in 1915.

In 1930 circulation was listed as 24,641 borrowers were 2,151, salaries were \$1,244, \$1,000 was spent for books and magazines, the total income was \$3,849 and the tax rates were 10¢ and 4¢. In 1940 the tax rates were still 10¢ and 4¢, the income had fallen to \$2,653 and the circulation was 30,882. In 1950 the tax rate had risen to 14¢ and 5¢, the year's income had risen to \$5,274 and the circulation was 33,150. In 1959 and 1960 the rates were 18¢ and 5¢, but in 1960 it was found there were so many extra expenses with redecoration, a new roof, new furnace and work on the exterior that the tax rate for taxes to be collected in 1961 were raised to 30¢ and 10¢ and the income that year was \$13,191.

The rates for 1962 and 1963 were also 30¢ and 10¢, but for 1964, 1965 and 1966 they were lowered to 24¢ and 10¢. In 1967 they were 25¢ and 10¢ and the board is asking 26¢ and 10¢ from the city and township for the year 1968. In 1966 the total receipts were \$15,876, circulation was 26,759 and the registration was 1,841, 209 of those were for non-resident borrowers. The registration was listed as 3,115 in 1960 but much of that was inactive and dead wood. A Demco visible file was purchased in 1962, all old registration thrown out and a new registration system started. The registration period is for two years and if the patron is not in within a year after his expiration date his card is pulled. The registration file is kept strictly up to date.

The library is heated by steam. The first furnace was coal fired. In 1921 it broke down and a new one had to be installed at the cost of \$551. In 1959 a new gas furnace was put in, thermostically controlled. From time to time, as early as 1916 and during the 1930's and 1940's the roof had to be repaired. Then in 1958 a whole new roof was put on. In 1919 the upstairs was redecorated, in 1948 the whole library, in 1960 the upstairs again and 1963 the basement was again painted. In 1961 the brick and concrete on the outside were pointed up.

In 1953 new florescent light fixtures were installed in the library reading rooms and the stacks. Then in 1963 a man from Public Service Indiana came and measured the reading rooms and gave the library the wattage requirement per cubic foot of space. Lights were installed flush up against the ceiling to provide the wattage specified.

Throughout the years Delphi has been proud of her library. The old Carnegie decor has not been tampered with. the walls and woodwork in the reading rooms are painted a soft light green but the four large so characteristic of Carnegie buildings and the entrance are still stained and varnished a dark oak. An oriental rug lies on the floor

between the entrance and the circulation desk. The lamp with the green shade bought back in 1908 still sits on the circulation desk. The clock with the pendulum bought in 1915 still hangs on the wall and tells time now as efficiently as back in 1915. The lobby and the entrance way are old brass fixtures so in keeping with the Carnegie decor. Delphi has a heritage in her library and she is proud of it. However in the reading rooms and stacks there are modern lighting fixtures. The building is cooled in the summertime by a central air conditioning unit, installed in 1965.

That Delphi is proud of her library is evidenced by the outside help that has been given it. The Oracle Club was very instrumental in getting a library organized. Various articles in the newspapers tell of them giving money to the library. The Psi Iota Xi gave money to help on the lighting in 1953, built additional book shelves in 1958 and installed a water cooler for the library in 1963 in memory of Catherine Brickenridge. The Lions Club gave shelving; the Jaycees of Delphi donated and helped in the decorating and cleaning in 1960.

The Tri Kappas gave money at various times and in 1959 established a library memorial fund. Members or anyone who wishes may donate to this fund in memory of someone who has died. The money from this fund purchased the two card catalogs. In the 1940's people began giving books to the library in memory of loved ones who had died. It is not at all unusual to have ten or fifteen lovely books given in memory of one person. So many expensive, valuable books are received in this fashion that the library could not have afforded to purchase out of their operating fund.

In the 63 years history of the library there have been few administrative changes. When the library was placed in the high school building in the spring of 1897 Miss Emma Myers was hired as librarian.

In 1904 she left for Albany, New York, for a six weeks training course. Miss Iona (Gertrude) McCain filled her position while she was gone. Miss Myers returned in July and the last of July she resigned to take a better position in Buffalo, New York. Miss McCain became the librarian at the salary of \$26 per month. In November, 1904, Miss Isabelle Rinehart was hired as assistant librarian to serve one hour at supertime for nothing for the rest of the year, then for 10¢ a day for that one hour. A janitor was hired for \$1 a week. In 1905 Miss McCain went to Winona Lake for a month to study library science and Miss Rinehart served as librarian in her absence.

In November, 1906, Miss McCain ask for a leave of absence with Helen Myers as assistant. When Miss McCain had not yet returned in May of 1907 the board asked for her resignation and when it was tendered in June of 1907 Miss Rinehart became librarian at \$26 per month, holding that position until she married Harry Baum in 1920. In 1912 her salary was increased to \$30 per month and in 1916 to \$40.

In 1915 Mary Cochrane was named to assistant to Isabelle Rinehart and in 1920 when Miss Rinehart resigned she became librarian and held that position until in June of 1960 when she retired, at that time receiving a salary of \$3,000 per year. Mrs Irma Crosby acted as librarian until school started, then Mrs. Mary Lamb became acting librarian, serving until her marriage in July of 1961. August 1, 1961, Mrs Hazel Fry became librarian at a salary of \$400 a month and held that position until her retirement January 1, 1968, when she was receiving \$450 per month.

Mrs Mary C. Howe probably gave more of her time than any other one person to further the establishment and growth of the library. She worked diligently in 1904 and 1905 to get a Carnegie library established. She served on the board from the time of its organization in 1904 until her death, December 9, 1936. She served in all official capacities on



the board and attended regularly the district and state meetings. She left an extensive collection of books to the library. September 6, 1937, William L. Haskell presented the library with a check for \$1,000 to be used for the purchase of reference books for the library as a memorial to his sister, Mary C. Howe. About half of it was spent for reference books and also many books were given by individuals in memory of her. In 1944 it was decided to invest the remaining \$500 of the Howe money in The First Federal Savings and Loan Bank. The interest from that goes into a Howe Fund and from time to time reference books are purchased with that money. A plate in the book shows it is a Howe Memorial book and the date it is purchased. In 1959 William Haskell died and he left the library \$1,000 as a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Newberry J. Howe. That \$1,00 was used as a payment on the gas furnace that year.

In 1957 Mrs. Meredith Carney Dial, a Delphi native then living in Indianapolis, died and a great number of books were placed in the library in her memory. Her husband, Thomas Dial, as a note of appreciation, wishing to do something in turn for the library and the town of Delphi, offered to renovate and decorate a room to be used just for memorial books. The room used for teen aged books was made over into a memorial room and was named The Dial Room.

In 1915 Deer Creek Township asked to be served by the Delphi Library and each year since then has levied a tax to help support the library. In 1951 representatives of the various townships and of Camden, Flora and Delphi libraries met at the Flora Library to discuss a county library. A plan for a county library was proposed with headquarters at the Flora Library but the Delphi board opposed the plan. In 1953 the advisory board of Madison Township talked of levying a library tax but nothing was done about it. Then in 1961 through the Library Services Act grant the library was able to offer free service

to Tippecanoe, Madison, Rock Creek and Liberty Townships for eighteen months on a trial basis, after that time if they still wanted service they would be willing to levy a tax. At the same time the library joined with nine other libraries to form the Crawfordsville Processing Center, the purpose being to get a greater discount on books and to get books cataloged and processed cheaper than each individual library could do it. The USA grant paid for the processing the first year, half of it the second year, then after that the group was on its own. After the trial period for the four townships had expired, Madison has levied a library tax for the years 1963 through 1967 and has received service from the library, both to individuals and to their elementary school. Tippecanoe is considering it, but it is a slow process and only through time can the people all be convinced they need a public library. ---  
December 5, 1967.