

LAKE GENEVA PUBLIC LIBRARY HISTORY

Compiled by Mrs. Hiram C. Smith)

One year from next August, 1944, our library will be fifty years old. For fifty years this institution has exerted an influence on our community which can never be measured. And, it is impossible to find a flaw in the steadfast determination of the people to make it a good influence.

This is a story of the unselfish devotion of many of the finest people who lived here. And, as this history of the Lake Geneva Public Library unfolds, you will see how successful these Boards of Directors have been from the first committee with their many, many problems down to the present Board who still have problems which often take men out of busy offices and women from their homes. The librarians, custodians, and patrons each have shared in the building of our Library, but patriotic citizens carried the early burden of the work alone.

From the Annals of Lake Geneva by James Simmons, I quote, "Asa W. Farr came to Lake Geneva in 1851 and opened a law office. A year or two later he built a fine dwelling house on the Lake Shore and brought his family here." That fine dwelling house is our Library building. Imagine what living in that spot must have been like one hundred years ago—no summer crowds, no speedboats, no telephones, no railroads, no picnickers, just the lake, trees, birds, solitude and soft summer breeze. It is hard to imagine that kind of a spot with our present outlook; an outlook of stampeding vacationists on a small space of land where anything goes — from reading a book on a bench to making love on a blanket.

Mr. George Sturges and his family were completely burned out in the Chicago fire of 1871. Soon after that they came to Lake Geneva to spend a summer. They stayed at the Farr home. I quote from a letter written by a daughter of George Sturges and sent to her cousin, Kate Sturges in 1944. "When the landlady objected to cutting down the corn that had grown high enough to spoil the view of the lake for the boarders sitting on the back porch, Father bought the place, the corn was cut and the lake enjoyed again". In 1881 when the family moved into the newly built home called "Snug Harbor", who occupied the building after the Sturges moved into their new home is unknown. However, records show in 1890, Mrs. Sturges gave the Y.M.C.A. use of the building and grounds for two years.

June 6, 1894, Mrs. Mary Sturges (her husband having passed away 3 years before) deeded, with certain stipulations and provisions, this lake shore property to the City of Lake Geneva to be held for the purpose of a public park. This property is situated in Block 32, Lots 3, 4, and 5.

The conditions are:

To the Honorable Mayor and Common Council of the City of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

Gentlemen:—I hereby propose and agree to convey to the city of Lake Geneva, my property situated in Block 32 in said city and more particularly described as fractional lots three (3), four (4) and five (5) in said Block, to be held by said city for the purpose of a Public Park, upon the following conditions, Namely: First -- Said city shall purchase the adjoining property, known as the Woodman property, and more particularly described as lots one (1) and two (2) in Block 32 aforesaid: to be held and used for like purposes to-wit: for purposes for a Public Park and for the further specific purposes hereinafter mentioned. Second — Said city shall vacate the street bordering said Block upon the south and west, commencing at Cook Street upon the east and terminating at Main Street upon the west, and include the same in such Public Park, so that said Block 32, together with the street so vacated, and the present Lake Shore Park situated west of said Block, shall constitute one continuous park. Third — There shall be set apart, either upon the property so conveyed by me, or upon the Woodman Property, a site for a Public Library Building; and until means shall be provided for erecting a suitable fire-proof building for library purposes, the building now erected on my property aforesaid, may be used for that purpose, but no other buildings shall be erected, or allowed on said Block 32, or upon the adjoining streets. But said lands shall be forever devoted to the uses of a Public Park and Public Library.

Dated Lake Geneva, Wis.
June 6th A.D. 1894.

Mary D. Sturges.

This is the description taken from Mrs. Sturges' Warranty Deed:

Situated in the City of Lake Geneva, in the County of Walworth and State of Wisconsin, that is to say: Lots three (3), four (4), and five (5), in Block thirty-two (32) in said city — late the village of Geneva — according to the map of said village now the city of Lake Geneva, on record in the office of the Register of Deeds in and for the County of Walworth and State of Wisconsin -- to be forever held and used for the purpose of a Public Park, and for no other use or purpose whatever, whereon no building or buildings is or are to be erected. The lands hereby conveyed are to be under the control and management of said city, by its authorities the same as other public parks therein.

Description taken from the Woodman Deed:

Situated in the City of Lake Geneva, in the County of Walworth, State of Wisconsin; that is to say: Fractional Lots numbered one (1) and two (2), in fractional block numbered thirty-two (32) in said city of Lake Geneva, formerly Geneva Village, according to the original survey and plat thereof, on record in the office of the Register of Deeds in and for said county of Walworth. Said premises to be forever held, used, and occupied for the purpose of a Public Park, and for no other purpose or purposes whatsoever, inconsistent with such use: Excepting however, and provided

Nevertheless that the authorities of said city may, and are hereby authorized to designate and set apart a portion of said premises sufficiently large for the purpose, as a site for a Public Library Building, and to erect, or cause, or permit to be erected, and maintain such library building thereon. This deed is intended to convey all right, title, and reversionary interest in all streets adjacent to, or bordering upon said lots.

There is some difference in wording in the two descriptions, but, to all intent and purposes, the two pieces of property became one.

It has been said and written that Mrs. Mary D. Sturges was one of the finest women ever to live. She identified herself with all worthy things, great or small. Her gifts to the Y. M. C. A. assisted much in buying building and grounds. She, with two other women, were largely responsible for the Episcopal Church building which continues to be an object of beauty. It was through her work in this church that she became well acquainted with the Rev. I. N. Marks. Mr. Marks, ambitious for the welfare of this, his little community, and energetic in executing whatever plans seemed to be for the common uplifting of his people, must have had many a visit with Mrs. Sturges about village conditions. In noting that a whole year passed after Mary Sturges gave the property to the city before anything was done about it leads one to believe she must have been somewhat concerned. This is purely imagination, but she must have expected something more to be done than just let the building rest idle. It is easy to believe that her hopes and fears in this regard were talked over with Mr. Marks for it was he who called the first meeting for the organization of a Village Improvement Association, this association being the wish of Mrs. Sturges, who also wished the Association to be officered by women as far as practicable (wise women who knew how to get things done).

The first meeting was held in the F. A. Buckbee home April 3, 1895. The only purport of this meeting was an exchange of ideas regarding methods, resources, etc. in organizing an Improvement Association. Articles were read, and it was decided to correspond with other organizations of like nature. Out of this, Mr. Marks prepared a constitution which was accepted at the second meeting April 10, 1895. At this time, a committee was nominated to legally incorporate the Association. The committee elected was: Mrs. E. M. Smith, Mrs. J. E. Burton, Rev. I. N. Marks, Mr. Alvin E. Tyler, and Mrs. F. A. Buckbee. The organization meeting was held June 29, 1895, in the house of Mr. Barfield.

In the meantime, the original scope of the Village Improvement Association had broadened somewhat, for it was found by Mr. French in corresponding with authorities in Madison that in order to secure a charter without great expense it would be necessary to place first the term Library. And so it became the Lake Geneva Library and Improvement Association. And thus in a very quiet sort of way was lighted the little candle which has burned with increasing brightness for many years, throwing its beams not only upon our own community but lighting the surrounding country as well. It has been the policy of the Library Board since the beginning that any one from anywhere may freely avail himself of all Library privileges. It is quite the freest thing in Lake Geneva.

As you see, the Lake Geneva Library rode in on the tail of the Improvement Association. Only incidently was the word "Library" first, and time has preserved the Library while all else is forgotten.

Quoting from the Constitution of the Improvement Association:

"Object. Article 2 -- The object of such association shall be the improvement and ornamentation of the streets, grounds and parks of the city, and encouragement in every practical way of whatever will promote public health and convenience and render the town more attractive.

"Also the establishment and maintenance of public library."

(Again you notice the Library seems to be more or less an afterthought.) Any adult person could be a member of the Association by paying \$1.00 per year, children 50¢ per year (until they are of age).

Twenty-five Dollars entitled a person to lifemembership.

The officers were the usual ones, and there were four standing committees, namely, streets and parks, finance, sanitary and the preservation of natural beauties.

Again, next to the last article of the Constitution we find:

Article 10 -- "For the present the executive committee shall constitute the Library Committee."

Going back to the organization meeting: Mrs. E. M. Smith was elected president, Mrs. Catherine Gill, vice-president, Mrs. Jennie Buckbee, secretary, and Josiah Barfield, treasurer. And, at this meeting, Mrs. Smith stated that the Woman's Edition of the "Lake Geneva Herald" of May 29, 1895, would probably realize \$500 or \$600 for the treasury of the Association, when the remainder of the papers were sold. On the strength of all this

money, presumably, the Association appropriated \$50 for the purpose of furnishing water and settees for said park.

The Woman's Edition of the "Lake Geneva Herald" played no small part in the development of the organization for it supplied the first money the Association had, aside from the dues, of course.

The Edition was very important in its own right. From comments and descriptions found in various clippings, books, etc. there was never a Woman's Edition like it before or since. These women undertook to get out a 32 page Woman's edition of the Herald on Declaration Day, 1895. The chief editor was Mrs. E. M. Smith. In spite of unexpected obstacles and delays, she and her assistants, with the aid of Mr. J. E. Nethercut, made a fine success. Another clipping states -- "Never before in the history of Lake Geneva has so much money been realized for the purpose of the kind. Why, at a meeting just a month later, Mrs. Smith and Mr. Marks indicated it was best to go slow in the expenditures of moneys earned through the "Woman's Edition of the Herald", I do not know.

(It is not customary for secretaries to record each passing remark when writing minutes for organizations of that nature -- but for posterity or readers 50 years hence, a few lines of explanation would certainly be appreciated.)

All the summer of 1895 the members of the L.G.L.&I.A. (modern note) busied themselves about cleaning the streets and alleys, getting waste baskets around, asking the park commissioners if they could do this or that. The records are scant, but it is easy to see that the city commissioners and the members of the L.G.L.&I.A. knew not where they stood in regard to each others rights and responsibilities, and it isn't hard to believe that the city officials were considerably disturbed by this sudden epidemic of city improvement.

And all the time the Rev. I. N. Marks quietly plugged along on the idea of a library. First, he got \$50.00 from the Association, then \$10 to buy supplies. About this time, the Editors of the Illinois State Press Association and their wives had a convention, and the Association ladies served them lunch in the Library rooms, thereby earning a sum to help the cause.

The time had come for a formal opening of the Library reading rooms. The date was set for August 26, 1895. The townspeople were invited through the city papers and invitations were sent to summer people. Sixty dollars had been spent for furnishings. The ladies decorated the rooms with flowers, and visitors called all day from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 in the evening. Many shore people came, "all of whom generously proffered gifts of books and periodicals for the library shelves. A goodly number came from the village among whom was Rev. Garvin, whose bright son recited in a very correct and interesting manner. Misses, Gillette, Cutteridge, and Farnham rendered in fine harmony, some choice music". Mr. Smails, publisher of Lake Geneva News, placed the first, and Mrs. George Sturges the last of 100 books on the shelves.

From this time on, the records reveal a decline in activities of the Improvement part of the L.G.L. & I.A. while interest in the Library grows very fast. In September, 1895, a motion was carried that all the money secured on life memberships be expended for books. Later in the same month, the question of laying a cement sidewalk from the Library door to Cook Street and to the lake was considered. They still had \$200 from the issue of the Woman's Edition of the Herald, and this money was being held for the sidewalk if the committee considered it wise to so spend it. Evidently, a conference with the city council decided several matters for this resolution was adopted in the next Association meeting:

"Resolved -- That we approve of raising money by tax, for a public library and that we approve of the efforts heretofore made to have that question submitted to the electors.

"Resolved -- That this association deems the procuring of and caring for a public library an object of the greatest importance to the moral and mental improvement of this community, and that, while we recognize the difficulty of procuring funds to purchase and care for such a library, we pledge ourselves to pursue that object until success is attained".

In the same meeting it was voted to spend the sidewalk \$200 for books and "Each and every book so purchased by said fund should have a poster therein showing that said book was purchased by funds raised by the Woman's Edition of the Herald".

The next step was the establishment of a Library Committee -- the first real Library Board. They were: Mr. James Simmons, chairman, Mrs. E. M. Smith, and Mrs. R. B. Arnold.

Time forbids following too closely the story of this earnest hardworking group of men and women, but it was a constant struggle to get money for books. Lectures were held,

25¢ admission, 35¢ reserved seats. Miss Westfall exhibited a collection of "Pacific Ocean Algae". Any gift offered was eagerly accepted.

The Association occasionally carried through some plan for which it was originally founded. Example -- The Northwestern Railway Co. was asked to beautify the depot grounds which was done. Mr. Marks got out circulars and distributed them on Main Street, admonishing people to take care of their garbage and other unsightly debris on the street. These circulars must not have done much good for a year later a motion was carried that what was left of the old circulars be sent out to remind people to clean their yards.

Nov. 5, 1897, a committee was appointed "to take steps, to formulate plans, to reorganize the public library and to place same in charge of and under control of the City".

The gift was accepted, and the council appointed Mrs. Elizabeth M. Smith, Mrs. Jennie O. Buckbee, Mrs. A. E. Tyler, Mrs. W. H. Macdonald, Mrs. Lucretia (J.E.) Burton, Rev. C. A. Osborne, Rev. I. N. Marks, Prof. F. A. Bartlett, and Josiah Earfield as the Board of Directors. Ordinance No. 35 is as follows:

Sept. 14, 1898. Ordinance establishing a Public Library and Reading Room.

"The common council of the City of Lake Geneva do ordain as follows:

"Section I. A public library and reading room shall be and hereby are established in and for the city of Lake Geneva, to be organized and maintained by said city under and in pursuance of Sections 931-936 of the Revised Statutes of Wisconsin and the acts amendatory thereof.

"Directors shall be appointed in accordance with said Statutes, who shall have the full control of said library (and of all moneys appropriated or donated therefor), and shall make such regulations as they may deem necessary for the free use of such library and reading room by all orderly citizens and the residents of the vicinity.

"Section II. The city of Lake Geneva does hereby accept the library of about 600 volumes generously tendered to it by the Lake Geneva Library and Improvement Association as a nucleus for the said city library.

"Section III. The sum of \$200 is hereby appropriated for the support of said library and reading room for the current year and for the purchase of new books and periodicals therefor. "

Adopted September 14, 1898.

Frank S. Moore, Mayor

C. H. Gardner, City Clerk.

In the fall of 1898, the Lake Geneva Library and Improvement Association transferred to the Board of Directors of the Lake Geneva Public Library all right and title to the property of the Lake Geneva Library and Improvement Association and thereupon adjourned sine die.

Mrs. Elizabeth M. Smith was duly elected president of the Board of Directors. From the beginning, Mrs. E. M. Smith was the driving force behind the "Improvement" movement. She served as president of just the one organization, the the Lake Geneva Library Board for fifteen years. She was a tall, angular, good looking "drivin woman". There was nothing she couldn't do and do better than anyone else. No job was too big for her to tackle and often in the old records are items such as "Mrs. Smith volunteered to interview the park commission", or "the President took charge of the matter". Mrs. Smith lived in what is now the "Gargoyle" and the lady, wrapped in a long black shawl with a little black bonnet tied under her chin striding purposely down the wooden sidewalks, must have caused many a procrastinating co-worker to quake in his boots. In 1905 she moved to Milwaukee and sent her resignation to the library but a resolution was passed, "That we hereby feel that Mrs. Smith can do as much or more for the interest of the Library, even though absent than any other person. That we fully appreciate her large services to our Library and to our City and express to her in this manner, our deepest confidence and respect". Mrs. Smith served as President for five more years, getting here to the meetings more often than not. When she finally resigned in 1910, Mrs. R. B. Arnold took her place and was president of the Board for ten years. Mrs. Arnold served on the Board for nearly 40 years, and when she retired, her daughter, Miss Edith, took her place and continues on in the work. Mr. Case followed Mrs. Arnold, and in 1925 the Rev. David Schaefer took the office. He served 11 years, was replaced by Mr. Guy Arkills who presided until 1938 when the present incumbent, Mr. Howard Clemons, was elected.

The city council appointed the first Board. Some of the members were on for 1 year, some 2 years and some 3. This plan was carried out, the council usually reappointing the members whose terms expired. The council sometimes elected a new member themselves as shown by the minutes of July 14, 1896 when the mayor's report stated Mr. C. F. Case was appointed to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Marks. Ten days later, a Library Board meeting was held and Mr. Marks was present. When the Mayor's report was read, Mr. Marks submitted as a correction to the Mayor's report, the assertion that he had not resigned and did not now intend to do so. A casual reading of these lines indicate a little ripple in the usually calm proceedings but underneath there must have been a rumpus of some size. For, in an issue of the "Herald" on the front page is a lengthy article full

of accusations, denials and explanations -- One of these "you didn't", "we did" or "I said", "you said", affairs that crop up in our newspapers every few years.

To go back to the meeting, the foxy library board fixed it up by referring to Article 6 of Chapter 1 of Library rules which called for a member of the school board to be an advisory member with all the privileges of the other members. Mr. Case was the clerk of the School Board. So, Mr. Marks and Mr. Case both stayed on the Board. At the present time, and such has been the custom for many, many years, the Council leaves the Board intact. When a vacancy occurs, a name is presented to the City Council. The Council in turn formally appoints said person as a director. In case you do not know the personell of the present Board of Directors of the Lake Geneva Public Library, they are, in order of their years of service.

Miss Edith Arnold
Mrs. Margaret Smith
Mrs. Mary Kaye
Mr. Frederick Taggart

Mrs. Marjory Allen
Mr. Howard Clemons
Dr. Will Macdonald
Mrs. Esther Smith

Mr. Morse

After the Library was reorganized as a city Library and the Lake Geneva Library and Improvement Association was disbanded, naturally, the Directors devoted their full energies to the library and the problems were many -- the librarians, the janitors, equipping the building, selection of books and magazines, and the most tremendous job of all -- financing the institution.

The City gave first 1/4 mill, then 1/2 mill, next 3/4 mill and back again to 1/2 and up to 5/8 mill. The Board never knew how much they would have to spend. Many a time at the end of the year the directors signed a note at the bank to get \$200, \$300, or \$400 to tide them over until the city money came in. For a time, the school board gave money each year for the Library's support. However, after a few years, the amount became more fixed, and the management became less difficult. The present tax rate is 7/8 mill which has been quite adequate until the last year or so.

Sometime between July, 1912, and July, 1913, the Board received a legacy of \$1,000 from the Henry Strong estate, and they promptly voted the amount to be set aside as a special building fund; interest to accumulate with principal. And so it is still held.

In 1937, this bequest appeared in the will of John B. Simmons of Racine, son of James Simmons:

"To the CITY OF LAKE GENEVA, WISCONSIN, for the use of its Public Library, the sum of Five Thousand (\$5,000) Dollars, in special memory of my father who was deeply interested in and took an active part in establishing said library, suggesting and hoping, though not dictating, that said bequest may form a nucleus or beginning of a fund for the erection of a new library building at some future time."

In 1918, Mrs. Jennie Buckbee passed away. She had been on the Board twenty-three years. Being one of the founders of the Library, it was naturally very close to her and she thoroughly understood the needs, dangers and problems confronting the organization. In her will she bequeathed to the Lake Geneva Public Library \$10,000. "In trust, the same to be kept as a fund and invested in safe securities, the annual income from same to be used in conducting the Library and keeping it open. The income only to be used, the principal to be kept intact." The \$10,000 is to be kept in trust, not as a building fund as some have believed. A very wise and far-seeing act, for that gift guarantees, in as far as is materially possible, a library for our descendants and future citizens. There was action at that time that Judge Lyon be consulted regarding the setting aside of the interest from Mrs. Buckbee's legacy toward a building fund, thus construing the word "conducting" in the will. There is no record of the result of that investigation, however, that has been done in a large measure.

The first woman to care for the library was Mrs. Frank Smith. She lived in the dwelling part and was a combination custodian and librarian. She was not referred to as a librarian.

The first official librarian was Miss Florence DeMain. Yes, our loved Mrs. Florence DeMain Brown! Fresh out of high school, she took the position in the spring of 1896 and worked for two years. Her salary was \$2.50 per week. She worked from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. with an hour off for lunch and dinner. Later she got a 50¢ raise.

When interviewing Mrs. Brown, it seems that the stove is remembered above all other experiences. Mrs. Brown brags that today she is a very fine fireman, and she declares she learned it all down in the Lake Geneva Public Library. The stove was supposed to keep fire all night, in fact, Mrs. E. M. Smith said it would and refused to provide kindling. But, in spite of "hell and high water", says Florence, it wouldn't, so each morning in cold weather she carried a bundle of kindling to work. On Mondays she had to build a fire in the furnace to warm the back room for the Chautauqua Association that evening.

Another bug-a-boo was filling the kerosene lamp from cans kept on chairs behind a curtain across from the books. She was forever wiping kerosene off the floor, but Mrs. Smith could fill the lamps without spilling a drop. And Mrs. Smith would come in, take the lamps out of all the brackets and clean the chimneys with paper 'till they shone -- in a few seconds or so it seemed to poor Miss DeMain who struggled by the hours trying to shine them up with soap and water.

Mrs. Smith and Miss DeMain could not quite see eye to eye.

When questioned about the summers, Mrs. Brown couldn't remember a thing about them. "Why it must have been nice there in the summer. Isn't it funny, I can't remember the summers? But you know, Margaret, the reason I couldn't keep a fire was because the firepot wasn't" -- and she was off on the stove again.

(I've sketched a map, under Mrs. Brown's direction of the quarters as they were at that time).

There was an average of six visitors per day during June and eleven per day during July -- mostly strangers. The Villagers weren't so library conscious. Mrs. Smith brought in a box of pink pills, and as each visitor came, in, the librarian dropped one in a jar. (also provided by Mrs. Smith.) That way an accurate count was kept, and it didn't matter that the pills were no longer pink by the end of the season. In the fall, a perfectly natural development arose which caused consternation among the Board members. The young people discovered the books, and, incidently, a good spot to congregate. You only have to remember Florence Brown's merry brown eyes to know a lot of them were boys. It didn't take the young people long to digest the few books, and soon a good time was being had by all, so much so that Mrs. Smith decided Miss DeMain was too young for the job. Miss DeMain resigned in the fall of '98 without a backward glance at the stove.

Mrs. S. A. Kinney was Mrs. Smith's neighbor across the street (in the house next to Week's barbershop. She was not young and accepted the library position gladly. Mrs. Smith promptly found that only the young yield. It wasn't long before a janitor was hired. Mrs. Kinney, took a self-appointed vacation in Dec. '99 and requested a fully salary for same. (she didn't get same). In the January meeting, 1900, the president was instructed to "inform the librarian that her work was unsatisfactory to the Board, specifying disregard

of the library rules as to hours of closing, mailing cards when books are overdue, keeping of proper records, absenting herself without leave and publicly criticising the actions of the Board." (Can't you just see Pres. Smith telling Librarian Kinney all that???)

At the next meeting the Board decided the library needed a change in Librarian, and Mr. Marks was to tell her. A week later Mr. Marks reported in meeting that Mrs. Kinney had positively declined to resign. So the secretary was instructed to inform Mrs. Kinney that after a certain date her services were no longer required and Miss Gertrude Noyes was hired. Mrs. Kinney later married a Mr. Stork, and as Mrs. Stork, she gave to the library a huge scrapbook of clipings which is extremely valuable.

Miss Gertrude Noyes was another individual who contributed a great deal to the development of the library. As soon as she took over in May 1900, peace and quiet prevailed. Miss Noyes was diminutive in person, but a giant in determination and perseverance in getting what she wanted. The records show that never once was Miss Noyes refused a request. Her advice was taken on all matters, and after one year she, as librarian, made the selections for all new books. This practice continues, although there is a book committee if needed. For all her quaint meekness, Miss Noyes was a person of strong likes and dislikes. If a disliked patron came in, Miss Noyes retired to the washroom and stayed there until said person departed.

In 1906, a Miss Gillette was hired as assistant librarian. (She was a niece of Orisco Gillette).

Miss Gillette and Miss Noyes were very good friends, and both were advanced students of Christian Science; in fact, so advanced that the Lake Geneva Church failed to interest them, and they attended the Milwaukee Church entirely. They lived together in the coachman's apartment of Tyler's barn. This barn was later moved a short distance and transformed into a small cottage, and again it houses a librarian. Many of you all have enjoyed pleasant evenings in that home.

A paragraph from the minutes of Jan. 25, 1912, gives an interesting glimpse of Miss Noyes' regard for her friend. "The secretary presented a request from Miss Noyes ~~that~~ the increase which had been voted to her at the meeting of Oct. 7, 1911, be not given to her but as an additional increase in the salary of Miss Gillette."

In 1917, Miss Gillette resigned and for two years both the Librarian and the Board had considerable trouble finding suitable assistants. But in 1919 a bit of good fortune befell the library in the person of Mary Cattin. Mary Cattin and the Library are synonymous to most of us. She has been there twenty-five years this fall, just half of the library's lifetime. Many words are needed to describe Mary for she is indeed a person of rare individuality, but the word "faithfulness" stands out above the rest. Year in and year out, she goes along just the same. If her salary is increased, or if it is decreased, if the librarian takes a vacation, she keeps "shop". If there is no librarian she goes along as acting librarian, always dependable and always there. The story of Mary Cattin and her experiences in a public library would make better reading than a great many of the books she handles and loves.

In 1929, Miss Noyes resigned after twenty-nine years of service.

Mary Cattin carried on for almost two years when Mrs. Lillian Johnson was hired. She remained until ill health forced her to resign in 1935.

In 1936 Mrs. Ethel Brann was unanimously approved as librarian and continues to serve the community in that capacity. Mrs. Brann is highly qualified, having her Bachelor of Library Science which is equivalent to a master's degree in any other profession. Ethel Brann is liked by everyone and is never too busy to give a helping hand, managing to make the worried patron feel that her chief pleasure in life is digging out musty old magazines for his literary venture. She is, without doubt, the finest, all-round Librarian we have ever had, in fact, she is the finest librarian in many a town, and it is not all uncommon for some outsider to try and lure her away from us.

Time is passing and so much of it has been given to the organization and personnel that the most important of all will have to be briefly described: — The Books. The history of the shelves of the L.G. Public Library would be a paper in itself. From the beginning, the kind of literature on the shelves and tables worried the directors. Often in the minutes the fitness of this or that publication comes up and always the decision is reached that while the board members themselves disapprove, it is necessary to supply the public demand. Now, of course, since there are thousands of books and dozens of magazines, the bad ones aren't quite so obvious. The librarians have done very good work

keeping the shelves clean and many a gift book is locked in a back cupboard.

We have 14,416 volumes on the shelves at present, with a total circulation of 30,390 for 1943, total number of readers and borrowers, 43,620. Over 100 magazines covering a variety of subjects is received regularly.

In fifty years time, many valuable books, pamphlets, papers and clippings have been collected.

Audubon's America is a most valuable book, and his bird book.

David Humes 6 volumes of the History of England, 1806 -- gift of Otto Schmidt.

Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, 1889, and the Book of Prints from Zurich, 1896.

A treasure is a small book of free-hand drawings from Mrs. Quigly from the Young Ladies Seminary.

The library possesses Harpers Monthly from the beginning. James Simmons gave many volumes from his library, but the first seven volumes were not among them. After the death of James Simmons in 1900, his son John, purchased the missing seven volumes and presented them, thus completing the set. These Harper's Monthly magazines are invaluable to writers and any interested in research.

(By the way, on this date, September 28, 1900, there is record of Mrs. Alice Barber, and Mrs. Louise Dickinson presenting a set of 46 volumes, Chas. Dudley Warners' World's Best Literature.)

In the various classifications and grading of libraries, our library rates high; in fact, one reserarch revealed that in most instances it reaches the standards required for libraries in cities of 8,000 to 10,000 people.

There are still many stories about our library which cannot be told because of lack of time.

The janitors - there have not been many, but their "ups and downs", "wills and won'ts" make a good tale. Interesting episodes - such as the distress of the Board of Directors about the goings on in the dark park at night. They finally had a big light put up in the yard - and how the children's reading room had to be closed at eight at night because mothers would leave children there while they went visiting - insurance, investments, summer patrons, audits.

And the building - the remodeling, furnishing, decorating and all the changes that have made it what it is today -- the homey, comfortable old-fashioned library that we all love and take so for granted. Think of the children who have stood in the rooms and have been the better for it. How many Fortnightly papers have come from that Library? Can you imagine what it would be like not to have it? The rambly old white house on the lake is the symbol of all it means, but that old house is ninety years old. It is constantly in need of repairs, and though every conceivable precaution is being taken, it is a fire hazard.

The time has come when we must have a new fireproof building. It is sad to see the old go, but how proud we will be if a sound, suitable building, which will enhance the park, be worthy of the lake and be a credit to Mrs. Sturges and to all who have given, the Directors, librarians, janitors, the patrons, -- the unselfish giving which has made our Lake Geneva Public Library what it is now -- April 4, 1944.