

HISTORY

In the Spring of 1865 a circulating library was started by J.S. Boughton in the Hartman building which stood at 735 Massachusetts street. Mr. Boughton had about \$150. worth of books and loaned them at ten cents a week, or furnished an annual ticket for \$5.00. The movement was popular but not profitable for Mr. Boughton, so a year later a library organization was organized. A librarian was appointed temporarily, her salary fixed at \$100.00 a quarter and 40% of the fees. The dues were fifty cents a month, or fifteen cents a week.

Many were the ways in those early times by which funds were raised to support such an institution. There were series of theatricals and tableaux, socials, festivals, excursions, donations of all kinds. Not only books were donated but a kind friend gave a set of chess men which was rented out at twenty-five cents per session. Then there was the lecture course that was worthy of a generous patronage and which must have brought in a goodly sum for the purchase of books. Among distinguished people who spoke for the cause were Bayard Taylor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Anna Dickenson, Theodore Tilton, Horace Greeley, Mrs. Lucy Stone and S.W. Hewlett. During the first two years of the existence of the association 75 volumes were purchased and 150 were donated.

In September, 1871 the city took over the library and it was moved into the Lawrence National Bank building where it occupied rooms on the second floor. Mrs. Helen Griswold who had been the librarian was succeeded by Mrs. Rhoda Trask who resigned in 1885 and Mrs. Mary F. Simpson took up the work. Mrs. Simpson was librarian for seventeen years. In 1902 she was succeeded by Mrs. Nellie Beatty, the daughter of Mrs. Griswold, the librarian of a half a century before.

During all of these years, the library had been gradually increasing in size and influence. It now possessed about 6000 volumes. Patrons paid one

Lawrence Free Public Library

LILLIAN J. CONSTANT, LIBRARIAN

Lawrence, Kansas

dollar a year for the use of the books, and though the library was nominally under the control of the city council, the income of the librarian depended partly upon the sale of tickets.

At the time that Andrew Carnegie was making his generous gifts to public libraries, loyal friends in Lawrence, led by ~~Mr.~~ Peter Emery, were able to secure for our city a Carnegie building. Mr. Carnegie gave \$27500.00 for a building upon the condition that the city raise by taxation \$2750.00 a year for maintenance. This necessitated the organization of a free public library under the state law. Mrs. C. P. Grovenor donated the site at the corner of Warren and Vermont streets upon which to erect a building. In 1904 the building was completed and formally opened December 26.

In the meantime Mrs. Beatty had been making a study of modern library science and had commenced cataloging the books. To Mrs. Beatty more than to any other person are the people of Lawrence indebted for a splendidly organized library.

In 1918 Mrs. Beatty married Mr. S. L. Palmer and was succeeded by Miss Virginia Edwards who had been assistant since the Carnegie library was established. Miss Edwards died in 1920 and her place was filled by the present librarian, Miss Lillian J. Constant.

During these years the book collection had been growing. Space was filling up and it was necessary to think of some way to expand. Another of our generous friends was ready with a solution. Mrs. Eleanor Henley provided the children with a new room and in 1922 the children's department moved down stairs into their attractive quarters.

The library now has a book collection of ³⁵⁰⁰20,792 volumes and with an adequate support from the city, the librarian need no longer depend upon the fluctuating fees for her compensation.