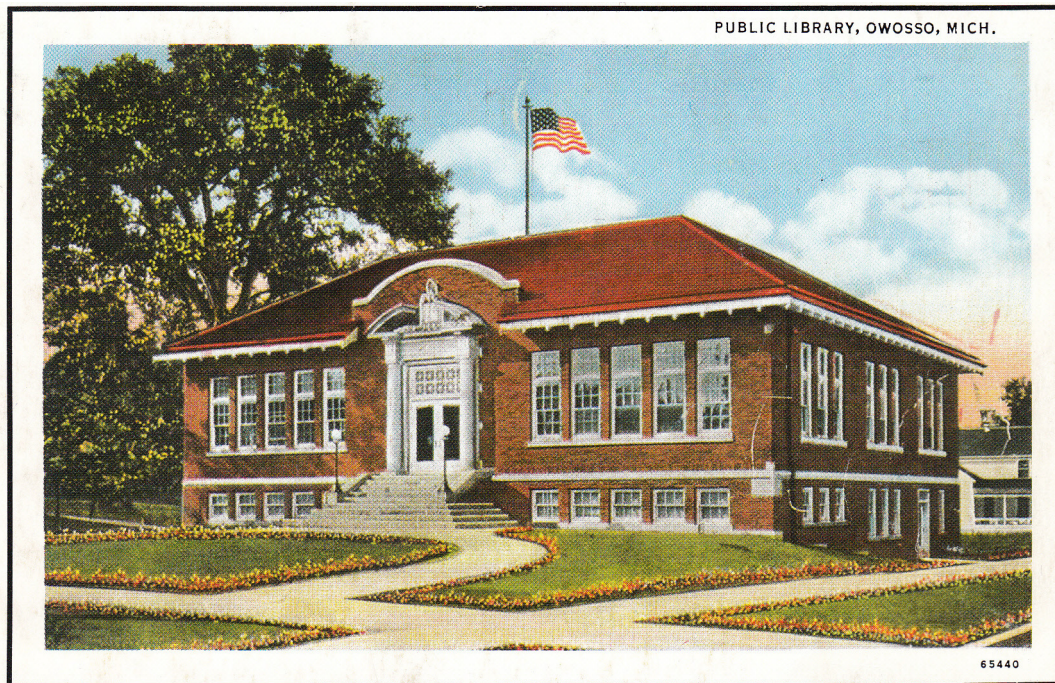


100 YEARS OF SERVICE: THE SHIAWASSEE DISTRICT LIBRARY, 1914-2014

Compiled and Written by

Margaret Bentley



Published by the Shiawassee District Library
In celebration of 100 years
As a Carnegie library.

1989
Second Edition 2014

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FOREWORD

The idea of writing the history of the Owosso Public Library has been discussed for several years. It was finally decided that this was an appropriate time as we will be celebrating 75 years in this building in July.

Even though the city of Owosso actually took over the library several years before the building was built, it was decided to start this historical narrative with the Ladies' Library Association. The work of this small group of women was to provide a foundation upon which today's library is built.

Many people have helped with this compilation. Helen Harrelson deserves special thanks for freely sharing her expertise in Owosso's history with me. Mary Maude Oliver, Glenn L. R. Baumhardt, Florence Lyons, and Freeda M. Willson helped by contributing some of their memories. It is unfortunate that space does not permit us to include everything which they shared. Ruth Owen and Lucille Couzynes helped me with the research, particularly with locating some of the newspaper articles about the library. Both the *Argus-Press* and WOAP provided publicity to help locate people with further information. Kenneth Uptigrove helped with the editing, and Barbara Holt took over some of my normal work load in order to give me more time to write as well as helped with the proofreading. Without this help the book would not have been possible.

I hope that this booklet will remind other people of some of their memories of the library as a "pretty wonderful place" to become acquainted with books and learning as well as some of the people who answered their questions and gave them suggestions.

We have attempted to check the accuracy of the information we have included, and we hope that nothing important has been missed. Anyone with additional information or corrections should contact the library so that changes can be made in the future.

Margaret Bentley
March 1989

Additional material added in 2013 for the Library's centennial.

THE LADIES' LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The idea of a library for the people of Owosso grew out of a literary club. During the civil war, a group of women met regularly to work to contribute to the Union cause and to help provide for the soldiers. Once the war was over, they continued to meet together as a literary club.

On May 5, 1867 the Ladies' Library Association was formally organized at the home of Mrs. Ebenezer Gould, which was on the southwest corner of Shiawassee and Oliver Streets. They received from the literary club \$12.00, a set of blank books and 48 volumes which were individual gifts of the citizens. On November 16, 1870 a charter was received from the state. (Owosso High School graduated its first class this year, too.)

According to their articles of Association, Mrs. J. A. Church, Mrs. R. Williams, Mrs. E. Gould, Mrs. J. Turner, Mrs. E. A. Todd, Mrs. J. M. Osburn, Mrs. W. H. Sexton, Mrs. L. A. Gould, Mrs. A. H. Parkhill, Mrs. C. W. Clapp, Mrs. C. G. Hathaway, Mrs. S. R. Bockee, Mrs. R. C. Beckwith, Miss L. M. Gould and Mrs. P. D. White were the charter members, and the purpose of their organization was for the promotion of literary pursuits. Most of these women were the wives of prominent businessmen and were in their 30s and 40s.

The offices of president, vice president, recording secretary, treasurer, corresponding secretary, librarian, assistant librarian and directors were created. The description of the librarian's job is interesting to note.

It shall be the duty of the Librarian to have in charge of the books, pamphlets, and other property pertaining to the library, keep the same in a room provided by the association, to have all books properly numbered and registered in a book provided for that purpose, to have the name of the association indelibly stamped on each volume, to issue them to none but the members in good standing, to charge each book to the person drawing, with the date of the same, to notify the Executive Committee of all persons retaining books, with the name, number, and value of the same, to be in attendance at such times as shall be designated for drawing books, unless represented by her deputy which she shall have the power to appoint.

While the librarian or her assistant were required to be present whenever the library was open, this did not generally create a hardship for the people in these offices. In the early years of the association the library was only open from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Sometime near the turn of the century, there was an increase from the 2 hours per week to 8 hours a week. It was decided to open the library on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. and on Saturdays from 4 to 6 p.m. and 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Financial support came from the dues paid by each member. Dues were \$1 a year and could be paid quarterly (25 cents to be paid in advance of the quarter). Children under fourteen years of age could be admitted at half price, but if they chose to pay quarterly were liable for the full 25 cents.

Anyone willing to pay their dues could join, but no one was allowed to borrow books, vote, or hold office until all their dues and fines were paid. If they neglected to pay dues or fines for one year, they forfeited their membership.

In the beginning books were loaned for 2 weeks at a time, and if they were kept longer a fine of 10 cents per week was charged. With the increase in library hours this was also revised to a fine of one cent per day for each overdue book. Fine money was also used to purchase new books.

Additional money occasionally needed to be raised in order to pay for library operations. One way in which this was done was to hold a party. On May 8, 1867 the following notice appeared in the Owosso Press:

There will be a Fancy Dress Party at Gould's Hall Monday evening, May 13th; for the benefit of the Ladies Library Association. Tickets can be procured in a day or two at the Bookstores and at J. C. Williams' boot and shoe store.

In 1894, the Ladies Library Association sent out invitations to a birthday party. Each guest was asked to bring a penny for each year of their life. This money was used for new books and the attendees enjoyed an evening of music and poetry.

Donations from individuals were also an important means of support. Most notable of these was Gov. John Bagley who sent a gift of \$10.00 each year for as long as he lived. He began in May 1871 when he gave \$10 to purchase Emerson's complete works.

The Ladies' Library Association's first officers were: Mrs. J. A. Church, president; Mrs. I. S. Bockee, vice president; Mrs. A. H. Parkhill, secretary; Mrs. J. H. Kelley, treasurer; Mrs. J. C. Williams, librarian; and Miss Emma Osburn, assistant librarian. Directors were Mrs. C. G. Hathaway, Mrs. E. P. Hitchcock, Mrs. J. Patchin, and Mrs. G. Hitchcock.

There was no permanent home for the library in those early years. The first meetings were held at the home of Mrs. E. Gould, and the first books were also kept there. In January of 1868, when the second Gould's Hall was built, the ladies had rooms there. A more public place was soon needed, and the library was moved to the Common Council room.

This arrangement lasted until October 1871 when the library was moved to the Union Hall. This room was large enough to not only hold the books, but to provide room for the socials which were held. Unfortunately, this venture was too ambitious and a smaller room was taken over Osborn and Son's store on August 1, 1873. Eventually, according to the city directories, the library was to move to the Y.M.C.A. at 110 N. Washington Street and by 1913 to the Laverock Building, 307 ½ N. Washington.

By the end of the first year, 1868, the library possessed 262 books. In 1871 this had increased to 521, in 1876 to 910 books, in 1907 to 1,000 volumes. During the first nine years of the association's existence, \$1,360.00 was spent on books and \$600.00 for rent. One hundred forty people were members in 1876.

Books were arranged into three categories: general literature, fiction and poetry, and juveniles. The catalog was a small printed booklet. It listed the books available and the by-laws of the Ladies' Library Association.

As the public's demand increased, it became increasingly evident that the library needed a permanent home. In January of 1876, Owosso pioneers A. L. and B. O. Williams presented

the ladies with a building lot on the northwest corner of Park and Exchange Streets. A centennial tea party was held to provide the first bank deposit for a building fund. Additions were made to the fund as the money was available, yet a library was never built there.

For about thirty years the library flourished under this arrangement. With the donation of land and increased use, it was suggested that the city of Owosso start a free public library. The ladies were disappointed when city officials turned down their offer. The society was also unable to launch their own building project, so in 1909 they agreed to accept \$1,000 from the federal government, and a post office was built on the lot which had been given to them.

Margaret McBain, a recent widow, was elected president of the association in 1909. Under her leadership, the proposition was made a second time to the Common Council, and in August of 1910 they agreed to take over the library. The city received about 3,800 books, \$1,000 in cash, and the rights to a building on North Washington Street, between Williams and Oliver Streets upon the death of the last of Dr. Champion's heirs. (The building was Dr. John H. Champion's home, and Champion was the publisher of the Press-American. He was also a brother-in-law to Jane Church, one of the charter members of the Ladies Library Association).

It was estimated that the library could be run for \$500 per year. Of the \$1,000 from the Ladies' Library Association, \$500 would be used to purchase new books and the remaining \$500 for library expenses for the first year. The only source of income was to be fines from overdue books. City attorney Pulver stated that "while he didn't want to have the city assume a burden by taking over the library, he . . . believed that it was the proper thing to do as it would make a good nucleus for a satisfactory public library" (Owosso Press American, August 16, 1910, p. 1).

A NEW BUILDING

With the agreement by the common council to take over the library, changes came quickly. Volunteers could no longer be expected to work whenever the library was open so Margaret McBain, former president of the Ladies' Library Association, was hired as the public library's first librarian.

In 1911 Mrs. McBain first wrote to the Carnegie Corporation about the possibility of their providing the funds for a new library building. William Seegmiller, attorney and secretary for the Owosso Improvement Association, continued negotiations for the next two years with the permission of the council.

In the process of securing a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, the city learned that it would need to provide the land for the building and 10% of the requested amount. This was a considerable increase from the previous year's expenses which had totaled \$789 (\$15 per month for rent, \$300 for the librarian's salary, \$104 for the assistant librarian, \$209 for books, and \$100 for miscellaneous expenditures).

Originally it was thought that \$15,000 would provide for a building. In the end \$20,000 was requested and received. The council also approved the levying of a tax for the \$2,000 a year for maintenance which was required under terms of the grant. The announcement of Carnegie's gift was made on Friday, April 13, 1913.

The problem of the land was solved by the Woodard family. In 1911 Fred Woodard had been approached by Mayor Otto Sprague and several other citizens concerning a piece of land at the corner of Shiawassee and Main Streets, just west of Comstock Creek. He consented to give the land to the city for a park to be named in honor of his family if the rest of the family approved. Instead, two years later, the Owosso Casket Company and the Woodards donated

the land to the city with the stipulation that it be used for a Carnegie library to be built within three years.

Up until this time, there had been a flat on the property which provided temporary housing for Woodard employees. The building was referred to as "Woodard's Ark" and each apartment had its own bridge over Comstock Creek which ran through the property.

In the meantime controversy arose who would be responsible for maintaining the library. The school board was interested in the job, but under rules of the Carnegie Corporation this was to belong to the city of Owosso. In April, the council voted to maintain the library based on the state laws in effect at that time.

The library committee, which was composed of George C. Reineke (a supervisor at Estey Manufacturing), chairman; W. A. Seegmiller, secretary; Edwin F. Conant, Stephan Springett and Margaret McBain; they now began to work with Architect E. A. Bowd of Lansing on building plans. An advertisement for bids for the construction was published August 1, 1913, and by the end of the month Rickman Construction of Kalamazoo was chosen for the job. (Rickman Construction had previously been involved in the construction of the county courthouse, the post office, and the State Savings Bank).

Ground was broken for the building on September 2, 1913. It was hoped enough work could be completed so the building would be enclosed before winter.

By October 28, 1913 enough work had been done for the cornerstone to be laid. Even though the weather did not cooperate for the occasion, hundreds of people were present for the ceremony which was delayed until 3 p.m. so that the schoolchildren could attend.

A parade was formed at the corner of Exchange and Ball Streets. Many civic groups marched, including a Boy Scout troop, the Knights Templar, and the Masons.

A Masonic ceremony for the laying of a cornerstone was conducted. Into the cornerstone was placed a history of the Owosso Library Association, several Women's Club programs, the Current Topic Club announcement, the 1913-14 yearbook of the Daughters of the

American Revolution, a directory of the Owosso city schools, a list of the officers of the city of Owosso and the Owosso Improvement Association, a list of officers and members of several of Owosso's lodges, and copies of several Owosso newspapers.

The cornerstone was laid with the same trowel which had been used for the laying of the cornerstone of the state capitol in Lansing when John Bagley was governor. At this time the trowel belonged to George T. Campbell of Owosso, and he loaned it to the Masons for the occasion. He had been saving it for the cornerstone laying for a new Masonic lodge someday.

United States Senator Charles Townsend was the speaker for the occasion. (Senator Townsend should not be confused with his contemporary Senator Charles A. Towne, whose bust is displayed in the library. Townsend was one of Michigan's senators at this time, while Towne, who had graduated from Owosso High School, had been a vice-presidential nominee as well as a senator from New York a few years earlier.)

Townsend spoke on education and commended Andrew Carnegie for his generosity. He remarked that, "This library is going to send out an inestimable amount of knowledge and will give inspiration to the young people and the old, who come here to read. They will receive education here and education is one of the elements of human life that must be recognized as necessary to success." The threatening weather, however, cut his speech short; the parade reformed and made its way back downtown.

On July 4, 1914 the building had been completed and a formal dedication was held. Approximately 400 people attended, making the rest of Owosso seem deserted. After an invocation and the singing of the national anthem, George C. Reineke, chairman of the building committee, thanked the many people whose generosity had made the library possible.

Mayor James DeYoung then accepted the keys and made a brief speech. In addition to his thanks to the Ladies' Library Association for their book collection, he urged that each person donate at least the value of one book, and reminded Owosso's businessmen that the library could become a business asset for the community.

At this time two plaques were also unveiled. The first was a bronze marker erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution honoring Owosso's pioneers. The second was a marble tablet honoring Carnegie, the Ladies' Library Association, L. E. Woodard, and the building committee. These still hang on either side of the main entrance.

The building was a typical Carnegie library. For efficiency's sake, most early 20th century architecture was standardized with only a few exceptions. For example, steep front stairs are standard; Carnegie believed that anyone interested in reading and education should be willing to make an effort and climb the steps for it. One difference from many other Carnegie libraries is the large, open main floor. Many Carnegie libraries were compartmentalized into small rooms.

The Carnegie Corporation made grants to 53 Michigan cities and 61 libraries were built. (Eight building were erected in Detroit). About 25 of these building have either been demolished or are now being used for other purposes. In many communities new and larger buildings have replaced the old Carnegie buildings;in other cases the old buildings are still in use housing everything from museums to office space.

LIBRARY SERVICE BEGINS

The books were not yet in place at the time of the dedication so the library remained closed to the public until they could be moved. On July 21, 1914 the newspaper announced that the Owosso Public Library would be open daily, except for Sundays and holidays, from 11:30 to 5 o'clock and on Tuesday and Saturday evenings from 7 to 9 or a total of 37 hours per week.

The interior of the new building, as requested by the Carnegie Corporation, was without any partitions, except those created by five foot high bookcases. The basement was designed to be used as a meeting room. There was no separate area for children.

Frances Jones, assistant librarian at this time, classified all of the books according to the Dewey Decimal System. She also attempted to create a card catalog at the same time. Apparently it had been hoped to have a cataloger from the state library undertake this task, but when no one else was available Miss Jones spent the better part of a year doing it herself.

In 1915 the first magazines were purchased. In July of the same year, the Y.M.C.A. library, with the help of Mr. Seegmiller, was turned over to the public library.

Sometime between 1914 and 1916 the first story hour was also held. Legends, fairy tales and other "inspiring works of literature" adapted for children were used. Over 300 children crowded the basement of the library, sitting on the floor (or anywhere else there was room), to hear Mrs. Maude Thompson tell three stories. How long these story hours were held is unknown.

By 1916 controversy over the use of the meeting room had arisen. Lee L. Woodard, who had been involved in the gift of the land for the library to the city, had been denied use of the meeting room for a Christian Science Lecture. According to a letter he wrote to the Carnegie Corporation, Mayor DeYoung had refused his request for political reasons. On June 5, 1916 his letter was answered. While the Carnegie Corporation did not object to the use of the meeting room for a Christian Science lecture, or a lecture on any other subject, they did feel

that “supervision of the lectures to be given . . . must be left in the hands of the authorities of the community.” They would not intervene.

In September of 1917, Mrs. McBain turned over her responsibilities to Miss Frances Jones; however, she did continue in the position of assistant librarian. She was remembered many years later in a letter as “a dear part of the Perkin’s household [the writer’s aunt and uncle] and so dear to us all that I was permitted to call her ‘Aunt Margaret.’”

With the beginnings of U.S. involvement in World War I in 1917, library services, like much of American society, was affected. In December library hours were cut back and then the building closed entirely in early 1918. From January through April 22, 1918, by order of Mayor Wright, the library was closed because of fuel shortages, high water, and furnace problems.

During this time, the librarian gave her services to the Red Cross. One of her responsibilities was to solicit books and send them to the soldiers.

In October 1918, the mayor again ordered the library to be closed; this time because of the flu epidemic. The librarian used this time to take inventory. A total of 5,131 books were owned. In December the library was again closed because of the flu, and it reopened on January 4, 1919.

Margaret McBain lived to the age of 90, passing away on February 15, 1934. Her obituary credits her as the one person who did more to provide a library facility for Owosso than anyone else. She was also a Sunday School teacher and member of the Congregational Church as well as an honorary member of the Current Topics Club. She was remembered as “a lovely lady, whose interest in the general welfare of her community was great” and a pioneer resident of Owosso.

THE 1920'S: THE LIBRARY BECOMES THE FOCAL POINT OF THE COMMUNITY

The 1920's saw many changes at the library. There would be a new staff hired, a park created, and several art works donated.

On October 31, 1921, Margaret McBain retired completely from the library. Mrs. Mabel Lingle took her place as assistant librarian until November 1924, when Frances Jones took a six month leave of absence. At that time, Mrs. Lingle became acting-librarian until her sudden death on March 30, 1925, presumably from an infection. This came as quite a shock to both her friends and the community as a whole since she had only been ill a short time. Mrs. Bertha Bartholomew filled in during this emergency, and then stayed on as assistant librarian when Miss Jones returned.

In 1923 Mayor Wright bought the lot adjoining the library to the north. This purchase included an old home which was removed so that the ground could be leveled and landscaped for a library park. The Women's Club took charge of beautifying the park, including the planting of eight trees to commemorate various people and organizations, including the pioneers of Owosso and the founders and past presidents of the Women's Club.

The dedication of the park took place on April 24, 1924 even though the trees had not yet arrived. Much of the meeting focused on the need for conservation. Professor Russell Watson of the forestry department of the University of Michigan spoke. He said that "the forests and wild life of America were a God-given gift and that no generation has any right to deprive future generations of the heritage of forests and wild life. He asserted that a park is just as valuable as are pavements, and that parks give youth a chance to understand nature" (*The Owosso Argus-Press*, April 25, 1924, p. 1, 3). Appreciation for James Oliver Curwood and his conservation efforts were also expressed.

In February 1926 the city of Owosso and the library prepared to accept a painting from Fredrick Frieseke. Frieseke was born in Owosso in 1874 and spent his boyhood there. After his mother's death when he was six years old, he lived for a time with his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Duff; he worked in his uncle's grocery store at this time. He went on to study art in New York and Chicago. He eventually moved to France where he spent most of his life and became known as an impressionist painter. He died in 1939.

"Lady With a Sunshade" was given to the library after Fred B. Woodard and his family visited Frieseke in France. Mrs. Woodard had requested that he paint a picture for their home and suggested that it would be nice to have another of his paintings in one of the public buildings in his native city. When he shipped the Woodard's their picture, he also sent one with it for the people of Owosso.

A formal presentation was made on February 9th with Mayor Wright accepting the painting on behalf of the city of Owosso.

Frieseke dedicated the painting to the memory of his grandmother, Valetta Gould Graham. She had been the one who insisted that he develop his artistic talents rather than make a career of the grocery business. Mrs. Duff, Frieseke's aunt, felt that this was a very appropriate dedication and that the painting belonged in the library. Valetta Graham had once been instrumental in leading a movement to obtain enough subscriptions to keep the Ladies' Library Association in existence. It was to remain in the library until 2000 when it was moved to the Shiawassee Arts Council where it is currently displayed.

Later that same year, Alice Rogers Fisher presented her painting "Cathedral Aisles" to the city. She had been born near Owosso in 1882 and studied art at the Cleveland Art Museum and in Italy. She spent most of her life in Ohio, but died in Florida in 1976; she is buried in Oak Hill cemetery.

Again it was Mr. and Mrs. Fred B. Woodard who suggested that she donate one of her works to the library. "Cathedral Aisles" was painted with this purpose in mind, and it depicts a

woodland path near Steubenville, Ohio. It was given as a tribute to her husband, Clarence Fisher, and her parents, Fred and Edna Rogers.

Mrs. Fisher, at the presentation of the painting on November 15, 1926, stated that the depicted scene was near her husband's boyhood home and had been visited often by both of them. It had impressed her with its solitude, silence, and restfulness, and she felt that "this was the sort of subject that would be particularly fitting for the library room, where calm, quiet and silence habitually prevail."

Mrs. Fisher's portrait was done in 1945 by William Findlay, and she presented it to the city on October 30, 1958. Her niece, Mrs. George Alexander made the formal presentation and Mayor George Rubelman accepted the gift. It was later learned from Mrs. Fisher's sister that the dog in the picture was named Teddy.

Frances Jones compiled a historical and statistical report covering the library's first ten years in early 1926. Annual circulation had increased from 2,266 to 5,668 and the budget had increased from \$2,000 per year to \$6,720. (Of this, \$1,800 went for the librarian's salaries and \$1,100 for books and supplies.) A wide variety of non-fiction was being requested, although the library was not purchasing technical books related to the manufacturing interests of the city at this time. There was also increasing usage by school students. In a little over a decade, the library had experienced considerable growth and truly moved from being available only to subscribing members to a library which was part of its community and open to all its members.

THE 1930'S AND 1940'S: THE DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II

By the 1930's the Depression had hit the United States and many people were out of work. This was to have an influence on library services which were in even greater demand.

Miss Winifred Bank had succeeded Frances Jones as librarian in 1926. Frances Jones, a native of Owosso, moved to San Diego, California after she retired in 1926, and she died there on December 24, 1953. She was active in various musical pursuits during her retirement.

By the end of 1929, she was stating that the Owosso Public Library's circulation was outstanding for a city its size. The library owned 9,200 books at this time and was circulating nearly 70,000 books a year. Magazines were also circulated, but they were not included in this count. Additional materials were available through interlibrary loan with patrons paying the postage costs.

The library staff, which at this time consisted of Miss Rank, her assistant Mrs. Edith Moulton, and two high school students, felt that they were being somewhat overworked. The publication of a list of new books was discontinued in order to "not stimulate the demand for books unnecessarily" until a larger book budget was available.

It was estimated that about 75 percent of the library's patrons were children and high school students. They thought that about 100 people were using the library during the noon hour and about 300 on a busy evening; but these estimates may have been inflated as there would not have been seating for anywhere near this number. They were not sure how many people were registered borrowers as cards were issued to families rather than individuals.

Within one more year, the library was being promoted as the one place where business was good. It was believed that the high unemployment rate was directly responsible for the increase in circulation. Many people who had previously been working were now turning to reading to fill their time, and others were saving money by staying home with a book rather than

seeking other forms of entertainment. A few people were seeking to study for better jobs, but the library had few technical books and had to borrow most of these from the Michigan State Library or Detroit Public with the patrons paying the postage.

Talk of a separate juvenile department had also begun. Nothing was done at this time, as this would involve money to remodel the building and to hire additional staff. As a result, children below the seventh grade were requested to only use the library after school and on Saturdays, leaving 7 to 9 p.m. on weeknights just for the adults.

The library's appropriation was only about \$5,000 per year, but this did not include utilities. In order to provide more reading materials, individuals and organizations were being urged to donate books, especially light fiction, westerns, and mysteries. It was suggested that this was one way in which the citizens could provide help for the needy.

By the end of 1933 the library was being forced to cut back even further. For five months of the year the library was only open three days a week. In addition, the library was closed for two full weeks in the summer. This cut amounted to the equivalent of nearly three months of being closed. Circulation had continued to grow to about 96,000 books.

In 1934 Mrs. Maude Thompson replaced Winifred Rank as the librarian. (Miss Rank also worked for the *Argus Press* while she lived in Owosso; she died in Cleveland, Ohio in 1943 where she had also worked as a librarian). Mrs. Thompson was the widow of a minister; she had also been instrumental in organizing the woman's auxiliary at Memorial Hospital. Shortly after World War I, Mrs. Thompson had been appointed chairman of a woman's committee to promote the construction of Memorial Hospital.

At the time Maude Thompson accepted the job her daughter wrote to her urging that she develop a social life for herself. Her mother answered, "When I mount the steps of the library and turn the key in the door, I get a thrill of happiness that nothing else could equal." However, her daughter did not need to worry; Mrs. Thompson was very active in the community. She was involved in the Congregational Church, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Women's

Club, the Zonta Club, and the Current Topics Club among her other activities. Of all of the Owosso Public Library's librarians, she was probably the most active in the community.

She was also probably the first librarian with anything more than on-the-job training. She had taken a library science course from the University of Michigan and was thrilled when there was an opening in Owosso.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Mrs. Thompson joined the County War Board, was county chairman of the woman's committee of national defense and chairman of county work of the Salvation Army. She also viewed the library as a war information center. The library was providing books for defense workers, employers seeking to retain employees, and housewives trying to stretch their dollars. Requests for materials with recipes which used little sugar and substituted for rationed and scarce commodities, budgeting help to meet the higher cost of living, and vacation ideas which would save on gasoline and tires were also common.

In 1941 the state of Michigan first provided state aid funds to libraries. At that time to be eligible for the state money, the library had to have local appropriation greater than the average of the previous three years. Mrs. Thompson considered this to be an incentive for local initiative.

In 1942 the library received slightly over \$1,000 in state aid. Much of the money was earmarked for books containing information on home defense, first aid, nursing, gardening, and food preservation. These were all in high demand at the time.

By 1946, with the war drawing to a close, the money was to have additional uses. New furniture was purchased and additional reference books were purchased including Facts on File and Standard and Poor's Register of Directors.

Library hours had been restored by 1942 to 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 7 to 9 in the evenings except for Saturdays.

In 1948 the library closed for two weeks to be redecorated. The walls were painted green with rose trim and the ceiling an off-white. All of the furniture was refinished and fluorescent lights replaced the chandeliers which that had been installed when the library was built. This was the first full redecoration to take place since the building was finished in 1914.

Mrs. Thompson died suddenly in 1951 at the age of 84. She had apparently been preparing to leave for work at the library when she had a stroke. As a public servant she was remembered for her courtesy, smile, and helpfulness. She was also known for her strict adherence to library rules. She had an iron gate placed at the top of the stairs to keep teenagers from going downstairs in groups and was proud of the "Silence Please" signs she had placed in the library.

THE 1950'S: THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN IS HIRED

After Mrs. Tompson's death in 1951, Miss Otillia M. Tick was hired as her replacement. She would spend much of the next three years improving services to children.

In 1953 half of the library's book budget was allotted to the purchase of children's books and the books were rearranged according to subject classification. Both children's fiction and non-fiction were shelved together. For example, fictional animal stories were shelved with non-fiction books about animals.

A summer story hour was also held weekly that year and a reading club using the theme of a space trip was held that same summer. While not very many children participated, it was felt that it was successful enough to try a similar program the next summer. Volunteer help from the local chapter of the American Association of University Women was the mainstay for story hours for many years.

The book budget for adult books was split in half between fiction and non-fiction. While best-sellers had been purchased in the past, additional novels including westerns and mysteries were purchased for recreational reading. The non-fiction collection was designed to provide basic information for the general user; other needs would be met from the reference collection or by interlibrary loan.

Tilly Tick resigned in December 1954; her assistant, Mrs. C. V. Barthlomew, had left in September, necessitating a search for a new librarian. The library had also failed to qualify for state aid the previous year because they did not have the services of a qualified librarian. At the recommendation of the library board, the City of Owosso hired Harold G. "Dick" Johnston of Lansing at an annual salary of \$5,000; he was the first librarian with a degree in library science.

Johnston's interests were in developing a library which would provide more than recreational reading. He envisioned a reference service for business and industry and materials

available for educational purposes. For Dick Johnston the library was to be more than a storehouse, and it should be in the position to give out information to the public, even over the telephone.

The library also installed a new circulation system and an outdoor book return on Main Street in 1955. The Gaylord charge machine used a card with a number on a metal plate. The number was then printed on the book card at the time an item was borrowed. This system would be used until it was replaced by a computer in the 1990's. The book return was eventually moved to the rear of the building when the Michigan Department of Transportation complained that it was causing traffic backups.

In 1953 the Woodard and Sons Furniture Company donated a glass topped table and several wrought iron chairs to the library. Earlier the Pioneer Wagon Works had donated additional chairs and two glass topped tables. Both companies wanted the furniture to be used in a way that would beautify the library and make it more attractive to residents. Part of the furniture was used to create an adult leisure reading area.

Other changes were also taking place. Additional staffing was being hired. Miss Margaret Holmes was a part-time typist and clerical assistant, and at board member Gertrude McClear's suggestion Mrs. Marcella Britz became the assistant librarian. Helen Mollema was also hired as a cataloger in 1957, and she worked two evenings a week as a librarian to meet the requirement of a second degree librarian to qualify for state aid. In 1956, the circulation desk was also moved from its original position in the center of the library to close to the front door. This made room for an information desk next to the reference books. The city also increased its appropriation to over \$21,000 in 1955.

In 1957 Dick Johnston resigned to become the assistant director of the Flint Public Library as well as president of the Michigan Library Association in 1964-65. Eventually he became the joint director of the Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham and the Bloomfield Township Public. In 1980 he received the Michigan Library Association's Librarian of the Year

Award. He was well-liked while he was in Owosso and is remembered as bringing a professionalism to the job which had been unknown up to this time. He died in 1985.

Donald Hendricks took over as director in 1957 and would stay until March 1960. One of the first problems which Donald Hendricks was to face was the collapse of the front steps in December 1957. This was caused by the former Comstock Creek which flowed underneath them. They were repaired in March 1958 without interrupting library service but causing some inconvenience as the main entrance was inaccessible during this time.

Hendricks was also to create a "reader's interest" shelving arrangement. The older books remained in their Dewey classifications, but new books were put into one of many different "interest" categories, such as hobbies, home, or business. It was thought that this would help patrons more efficiently locate books, but was gradually dropped and completely discontinued in the 1970's when it was decided to be too cumbersome. To locate a book often meant looking in three or four different areas.

Parking also became a problem at this time. Main Street was becoming busier so the park behind the library was removed and replaced with a parking lot in 1958.

In 1959 phonograph records were first added to the library collection and a microfilm reader purchased so that the *Argus-Press* could be stored more efficiently. The Library was becoming increasingly more modern and continued to be responsive to the concerns and needs of the people.

THE 1960'S: A DECADE OF PROBLEMS AND CHANGE

In March of 1960 Donald Hendricks resigned to accept a position in Decatur, Illinois with Millikin University where he served as director until 1963. The library board had difficulty finding a suitable replacement, but Helen Mollema was persuaded to accept the position in November. She had been somewhat reluctant to become the head librarian, but since Hendricks had left she had been acting librarian, and she felt that since she had been doing the job during this time, she might as well accept the position.

Mrs. Mollema was to face many challenges during the next eight years. Some of the problems she faced are still present today while others were solved in a way to move the library into more of its present position.

In 1960 and 1961 repairs and some minor improvements were made to the building. Both floors were redecorated, better lighting installed, the roof repaired, and a gas furnace installed. In February 1962 new exterior doors replaced the original doors and transom on the front of the building.

The library was now open 50 hours per week, down from 64 during the previous decade. The hours during the 1950's are unknown, but in the 1960's the library was open from 6 to 9 p.m. on Mondays, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

The library was circulating books, pamphlets, magazines, and phonograph records at this time. Most loans were for two weeks. Telephone books from other Michigan cities had also been added to a small but growing reference collection.

The number of staff employed was also growing. Mrs. Mollema continued to do the library's cataloging until 1962 when Mrs. Etta Reed was hired as cataloguer. In addition, Miss Margaret Holmes replaced Mrs. L. Bartholmew as secretary.

Both space and children's services were becoming problems. The staff was complaining that they were constantly rearranging the main room to make add new shelving for the addition of new books. The children's section had been shoved into the southwest corner on the main floor. Summer story hours were sponsored by the American Association of University Women while the Junior Chamber of Commerce Auxiliary provided a winter story hour. The summer reading program had been discontinued because of a lack of interest.

In addition to the cost of remodeling the downstairs meeting room into a children's library, such a move would entail the addition of at least one more staff member. The biggest problem was funding with the city commission suggesting that the library's hours be cut back to ease the overworked staff and the library board feeling anything less than the 50 hours per week which the library was open was unsatisfactory. Mrs. Mollema recommended that either a children's librarian be hired or the secretary's job be made full-time.

In September of 1963, Carolyn Taber was hired as a full-time children's librarian. Work on the downstairs was completed the following year, and about 7,000 books and records were moved. Even with the additional staff member, the children's library was open only 42 hours per week; it was closed all day on Monday as well as Tuesday through Thursday mornings. In 1965 Beatrice Steck replaced Miss Taber as the children's librarian; she would remain in the position until her retirement in 1992.

Problems with vandalism and disruptive teenagers also plagued the 1960's. Photocopiers were still considered to be prohibitively expensive so teachers were requested not to require pictures other than a student's own artwork as part of an assignment and encouraged to check with the librarians before research assignments were given to see if adequate materials were available. There were also reports of teens lying on the tables during the evening hours, a phone being ripped off the wall, and staff members being threatened. The police eventually became involved, but the mayor could not justify the cost of assigning an officer to the library during the evenings. Since both the public and the high school libraries

were having similar problems, the teenagers were blamed. Both the public and school librarians also sought to remind students and their parents that theft and vandalism of either's materials was really the theft of their own tax dollars.

Discipline problems with the teenagers became a major issue. Mrs. Britz, who walked home from work each evening, was intimidated, and the students simply laughed at Mrs. Mollema's attempts to get them to behave. Board members were being asked to help control the teens in the evenings and on some evenings a uniformed police officer was present. Of course, during these times there were no problems. Finally, the police realized the seriousness of the problem when an officer walked out the front door, leaving a fairly calm library, and a few minutes later walked up the back stairway to a much more chaotic situation.

By mid-October of 1962 Mayor Rubelman visited the library in the evening to speak to the young people who were present. While he did not threaten them, he did warn them that drastic measures could be taken if the situation did not improve. He did not feel that the expense of assigning a policeman to the library in the evenings was justified, but he did imply that the library could be closed during the evening hours if necessary. By this time, the library had already closed early on several occasions because of the discipline problems.

The solution, which took effect in January of 1964 and continued for several years, was known as "school hours." During the school year, study use of the library was limited to girls on Monday and Wednesday evenings and to boys on Tuesday and Thursdays. Anyone was allowed to come in and check out books at any time the library was open, but students could only sit down at the study tables and work on the appropriate nights. In addition, several other rules went into effect: no talking above a whisper, no group studying, no unnecessary slamming of the books, no moving of the chairs without permission, no use of the library telephones, and no eating, drinking, or smoking in the library. "School hours" were discontinued before 1970 when the problems had been alleviated.

A new city charter went into effect in July 1965 which changed the composition of the library board. Its size was reduced from a seven to five member board. Members were appointed by the mayor and subject to confirmation by the city council.

Also in 1965 a stereo was purchased with state aid funds so that the library's growing record collection could also be enjoyed in the building. Headphones were available at the circulation desk for those who wished to take advantage of the new equipment.

One of Mrs. Mollema's projects while she was librarian was to obtain a complete collection of James Oliver Curwood's book for the library. This was to be a special non-circulating collection for research and display use only. She was able to do this by 1966. George Campbell, of the *Argus-Press*, assisted in this project by donating his collection of autographed copies to the library. Curwood's Great Lakes was a gift from the Sage Library of Bay City.

In June of 1968, Mrs. Mollema announced her retirement. She left a library of approximately 34,000 volumes. Marcella Britz became acting librarian until a new director with a degree in library science could be hired. Mrs. Britz would remain on staff until 1979, serving in the newly created position of Adult Services Librarian from 1970 to 1975, and as a part-time employee from 1975-1979. She died in 1985. In addition to her work, she was also a member of St. Paul's Church, the Shiawassee County Historical Society, and the Memorial Hospital Auxiliary. She was an avid reader and was able to provide many people with reading suggestions.

Also in 1968 the rear door of the library was replaced and patrons were allowed to enter the building directly from the parking lot for the first time. Previously, the front door facing Main Street was the main entrance.

In 1969 Mrs. Britz announced the completion of the microfilming of the *Argus-Press*. This gave the library access to all of the existing back issues, beginning in 1862, and a convenient way of storing them.

Also, in 1968 and 1969 a delivery service to shut-ins was instituted. This allowed people from Owosso who were unable to come to the library to obtain library books on a monthly basis. Books were chosen by the library staff and delivered by a volunteer. Area Girl Scouts originally helped with the deliveries as well as providing a winter story hour.

As the sixties drew to a close the library had taken on much of its present character. New challenges as well as the continuation of many already existing problems would face the staff in the next two decades.

THE 70'S AND 80'S: A MORE MODERN LIBRARY

With Mrs. Mollema's retirement in 1968, the library was again without a professional librarian which also put their state aid money in jeopardy. In August 1970 Kenneth Uptigrove began working as the new library director. In addition to his work at the library he was active at various times in several community organizations—the Jaycees, the Curwood Castle Restoration Committee, the intermediate school district's Career Education and Planning District Council, the Owosso Kiwanis Club, and the First Congregational Church. Statewide he also served on various boards and committees of the Michigan Library Association. Finally, he was an active member of a conservation association, the Michigan Council of the Ruffed Grouse Society, including election as president for 1989-90.

Earlier that same year, the Owosso Public Library had earned recognition at the American Library Association's annual conference. It was one of two Michigan libraries honored as being current. The book selection staff was considered to be primarily responsible for this designation.

Also in 1970 a coin-operated photocopier was installed. It was hoped that this would cut back on the mutilation and loss of some of the library books as well as aid those who were using the non-circulating reference collection. In 1976 a reader-printer was made available to those who wished to have copies made from microfilm, and in 1979 a microfiche reader was purchased.

Several donations were made to the library in 1970. The Owosso Jaycee Auxiliary donated a new sign for the front lawn, the Shiawassee County Genealogical Society gave some of its material to the library for a genealogy section (a practice which they have continued through the years), and Dr. Paul Ball's estate gave a large donation of books. A portrait and

several photographs of James Oliver Curwood were also given to the library by Mrs. Ralph Tate.

Library hours were increased slightly at the beginning of 1971. On Mondays the library opened at 3 p.m. rather than 6 p.m. Also, in 1972, the circulation period was extended from 2 weeks to between 3 and 4 weeks with all materials due on Thursdays. 1971 was also to see several other firsts.

During the summer of 1971, an agreement was reached between the library board and the Mideastern Library Cooperative. The Owosso Public Library joined the cooperative in exchange for a different form of state aid which also helped to fund the coop. The primary advantage to library users was the ability to now borrow books from libraries in Flint, Genesee County, Lapeer County, and Perry in addition to what had previously been available from the State Library in Lansing. (Eventually all of the libraries in the eastern part of Shiawassee County would join this cooperative). Other advantages included increased publicity and public relations through the cooperative office and in-service training for the staff of member libraries.

Children's services continued to expand. A puppet theater was constructed, and the first puppet show, based on *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Charlie Brown: It's the Great Pumpkin*, presented on October 28, 1971. Puppet shows quickly became a Christmas and spring break tradition.

Film series were also introduced for the first time in 1971. These were quite popular for many years although they were gradually discontinued as video tapes have replaced 16 mm films in popularity.

The following year, 1972, agreements were reached with Caledonia, Owosso and Rush Townships which would allow their residents to use the library without purchasing a non-resident card. In turn, the townships agreed to turn their shares of penal fine money over to the library. A similar agreement was reached with Bennington Township in the early 1980's.

Also in 1972, a new type of summer reading program was introduced. Story hours were held in five different outdoor locations during June and July. In addition, participating children earned "library dollars" for the books they read, and these could later be spent at the library carnival in September. A 600 percent increase in participation (450 children) in just the first year was proof of success. Similar summer programming is held each year.

In the early seventies, staffing was also altered slightly. The position of assistant librarian was changed to adult services librarian, recognizing the existence of two separate departments (adult and children's services). Mrs. Britz held this position until 1975; Rosemary Rice was hired in 1976 and held the job until 1978; Al Bryant was then hired to fill the vacancy, but he resigned the following year. Margaret Bentley has been in this position since 1979. She has also been a member of the Michigan Library Association, the Owosso chapter of the American Association of University Women, and Grace Bible Church.

Revenue sharing funds became available in 1974 which were used to remodel the children's library. At this time a new ceiling and carpeting were installed and new furniture purchased to make the room more pleasant and cheerful. A new area for picture books and children's programming was added so that these activities would be less disruptive to other people using the children's library.

Also in 1974, the microfilmed back files of 24 magazines, which were often used for reference purposes, were purchased. Eventually, this collection would also include several years of the Flint Journal as well as many years of the Argus Press. The microfilm also helped stretch what was now hard to find space.

The Friends of the Owosso Public Library was organized in 1974. Their purpose is to promote use of the library which they accomplish by providing various programming for both adults and children. Most of their income is raised through used book sales. They underwrite the library carnival each year, have paid various authors to speak at the library, and have purchased equipment for library. There had been a friends group in the late 1950's, but it had

disbanded in the early 1960's. The members of the 1974 group included Suzanne Gibbons, Jessica Janego, Dorothy Mastrodonato, and Lois Wilson.

Library hours were again extended in the 1970's. In 1975, Sunday afternoons were added from October through April. Additional Monday hours were also added at about the same time with the library now opening at noon. Friday hours were shortened to noon to 5 p.m. By 1980, the library had again increased hours on Mondays so that the library opened at 10 a.m. and Friday afternoons were shortened to 1 to 5 p.m. for a total of 59 hours per week during most of the school year.

Also in 1975 topographic maps of Michigan were added to the library which now included over 43,000 books. Framed art prints, posters, and cassette tapes had been added in 1974. Pamphlets, magazines, records, posters, and 8 mm films were also available at the library.

In 1976 the library received a sizable bequest from the Frank Gute estate. This money was used for capital improvements, particularly the purchase of storm windows and the installation of air conditioning.

The 1980's brought a fiscal crisis to the library which would eventually force some major changes in the following decade. At the same time, as in most times of economic downturns, usage was increasing, and investments needed to be made in the new technologies to keep the library current. Kenneth Uptigrove and his staff were faced with the challenge of meeting increasing demands with fewer resources.

The first major technological change took place in July 1980. The library's card catalog was gradually transferred to a computer-output-microfilm catalog which was known as COM-CAT. Inputting older local holdings took much of the staff's time for the next several years; it would be completed in 1984, making the card catalog obsolete. The holdings of the libraries in Flint, Genesee, and Lapeer Counties as well as parts of Shiawassee County were added to a database from which a reel of microfilm was produced three or four times per year. While this

database would eventually be used as the basis for the first online catalog and greatly facilitated interlibrary loan, COM-CAT was never liked by either the staff or the general public. It was chronically out of date, requiring a paper file to be kept of all new purchases; also until the retrospective conversion was completed, it was necessary to consult both the card catalog and the COM-CAT to determine whether or not a particular title was owned. It was also difficult to use, and nearly impossible to locate a specific spot on the microfilm without continually moving back and forth multiple times.

Staff size was also at an all time low since 1970, so volunteer help was used to provide much of the children's programming. Girl Scout troops provided a winter story hour and several community groups helped with the library carnival. In addition, the Shiawassee County Genealogical Society regularly had volunteers at the library to help those interested in researching their family tree.

By the end of 1989, circulation was exceeding 111,000 items per year, and the library owned just over 58,000 books and almost 2,500 phonograph records. Genealogical materials were in particularly high demand, especially the U.S. census and obituaries, both of which were available on microfilm. The library's service area also expanded to include Bennington Township in 1981.

Donations were a major source of new materials during the decade. In 1981, the Alvin M. Bentley family donated 3,600 books, the largest single donation in the library's history. The following year, Adele Ball's library of about 1,400 books was donated as well as money from Clara Marie Sayle's estate for children's books and materials about Michigan. These donations were particularly welcomed as the library's materials budget was shrinking to an all time low.

By 1982, the library board was facing the possibility of cutbacks due to a decrease in funding. At that time, most of the library's money came from an appropriation from the City of Owosso and penal fines, both of which were shrinking. Facing the option of reducing hours and laying off one of the two part-time adult public service employees or closing for five days during

the year and requiring all staff to take these days as unpaid holidays, the staff and board opted for the unpaid holidays. During the 1982-83 fiscal year the library closed for five days with the entire staff taking unpaid leave in order to maintain existing services and to avoid a cutback in the library's hours.

Service to handicapped individuals was also improved in the '80's. In 1984 the Owosso Kiwanis Club donated a TDD (Telephone Communication Device for the Deaf) to the library. Telephone services, including reference service, could now be used by anyone with access to a TDD.

The book budget was also cut from about \$33,000 in 1980-81 to \$700 for the 1983-84 fiscal year. This meant that other than maintaining a few standing orders, the library could only afford to purchase a few best-selling adult fiction titles even though most of their state aid money was also being spent on materials. Virtually no children's materials were purchased at this time.

1985 saw a slight improvement in the budget, primarily due to a change at the state level which allowed penal fines to be distributed quarterly rather than annually. The Owosso City Council also approved additional funds specifically for book and periodical purchases. By 1988 the city council proposed a series of inter-governmental agreements whereby the four townships which the library was serving would share in the funding; however, they would not be able to have voting representation on the library board under state law. This did bring in some additional revenue from Owosso Township, and the City of Owosso agreed to maintain their funding at the 1987 level, but money was still tight.

Later that same year work began on installing a lift which would make both floors handicapped accessible. This was finished in 1986. The City of Owosso paid for this improvement with equity funds distributed by the State of Michigan.

Other changes in the building included a rearrangement of the adult level to create a more consistent shelf order and movement of the circulation desk from the front of the building

to next to the rear stairs to both provide better sight control and in recognition that the rear entrance was used by the majority of patrons. Some of the book shelving was rearranged to provide better protection from theft, to provide more control over the study area, and to put nearly all the books into one numerical arrangement. It also made better use of space which was becoming increasingly tight. In 1986, repairs were made to the subflooring upstairs, new carpeting was laid, and the walls were repainted necessitating the closing of the library for 11 days in November.

The collection also continued to grow. In 1985 videotapes were added with a \$1 rental fee to be used for the purchase of additional films. Compact discs were first purchased in 1988. By end of 1989, the library owned 64,650 volumes, 2,281 records, 141 compact discs and 917 video tapes.

1986 saw the purchase of a new photocopier for public use and the first personal computer which was shared by the entire staff; a second computer was added the following year. The computer was used for inputting catalog data to maintain the COM-CAT, word processing, and sign making. A new microfilm-reader printer which provided positive images was purchased in 1988.

In 1987 another shift was made in the library's hours. Surveys were taken during the year which indicated that usage was up and shifting from book circulation to research in the library, usage of A/V materials, and use of the photocopier. As a result, a shift was made in the Friday and Saturday hours during the three summer months—the library opened at 10 a.m. rather than 1 p.m. on Fridays, but closed at 2 p.m. on Saturdays rather than 5 p.m. This also saved some money in staffing costs.

1987 also saw several other improvements. The peninsulas were removed from the parking lot, allowing two more spaces to be added. Work was also finally completed on the catalog input, just in time for the difficult-to-use COM-CAT to be replaced by LaserGuide, a union catalog for the Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative, in 1988. The data was stored

on a compact disc and accessed via a computer. Both the staff and public quickly adapted to the easier to use and read format, and the card catalog was eliminated.

THE 1990'S: A NEW NAME AND THE EMERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGY

With the celebration of the Owosso Branch's seventy fifth birthday in 1989, little did library staff know how much change there would be in the next decade. Kenneth Uptigrove continued as director during this period.

The first change, was the addition of a county-wide literacy program. The library served as the fiscal agent for Shiawassee Adult Literacy Association. The literacy program was funded through grants and donations until 2002 when it was briefly taken over by Baker College before being shut down completely.

At the same time, staff were working toward the library's first automated circulation system. Known as MOLLI, this DOS based system, provided both an online catalog to the public which was current and a way to track which items were checked out without the filing of cards. Overdue notices could be printed without typing each individual notice. As the library had now grown to more than 64,500 books and almost 1,000 video tapes plus additional sound recordings, this represented a huge savings in staff time. This time was then spent on issuing new cards to library users and working on the database to make it an accurate picture of what the library really owned. The collection was also extensively weeded and the adult circulating materials barcoded in late February 1990. The library closed for two weeks for this project; the remainder of the library collection, including all the children's materials, was done as staff time was available later in the year. It had been hoped to complete the entire library during the two weeks it was closed, but both full-time children's department staff members were off for illness or injury at that time. All other staff worked six days a week, and some up to about 80 hours per week, in order to complete as much work as possible during this time. Barcoding would not be completely finished until October 1991. With the change to a computerized system, the circulation period was changed to 21 days, and all items were no longer due on Thursdays.

Also, during 1989, City Manager Alex Allie proposed a new joint library, combining both the public library and Baker College's library. The city purchased property at the corner of South Washington and Gute Streets for a construction project tentatively planned for 1992; but when the joint venture failed to materialize, the land was sold to Baker College. At the same time, a library feasibility study was approved by the city council at a cost of \$20,000, half of which was paid by Baker College.

While the idea of a joint library excited the city manager, council, and various others, it failed to win the support of many residents and library employees. If the libraries had combined, some library functions would have remained in the current building to satisfy the requirements placed on the City of Owosso by the Woodard family when the land was donated. Most likely, this would have been office space or the children's section. The general public was unwilling to see services divided by age in this way, and Baker College was not anxious to provide services to children and young adults. There were also potential problems with two separate collections for different purposes, two separate staffs (each with different pay scales, holidays, etc.), and two different computer systems being housed in a single building. Ultimately, the study recommended that the two libraries not be combined because of differences in funding, mission, and governance.

By the time Tomblinson Harburn Associates of Flint had completed this study in mid-1991, there had also been a change in city management. The study found that the current building was too small to meet the library's needs (7,500 square feet as opposed to an ideal 22,500 square feet) and needed repairs to the heating and cooling systems as well as replacement of lead water pipes. It also noted that work needed to be done to the exterior of the building, the two floors increased staffing costs, the floor load was not designed to accommodate the addition of more shelving, and adequate workspace was not provided for either the staff or public.

They also addressed what they considered to be an even more pressing problem for the public library—stable funding. The City of Owosso had been complaining for a number of years that they had been providing the majority of the library's funding (approximately 1.4 mils) while only Owosso and Caledonia Townships contributed towards the library's needs. The Owosso Public Library ranked 22nd out of 30 other similarly sized Michigan libraries in per capita funding. Also, during the early 1990's a decrease in penal fines collections had again forced a reduction in the library's book budget with purchases limited to just bestsellers. The study pointed out that in 1981, about 3,450 books had been purchased, but by 1990, the library could only afford to purchase about half that number, thereby "diluting the quality of the library's book collections, and reducing the effectiveness of library services."

In late 1991, representatives from cities, townships, and libraries throughout Shiawassee County began meeting to discuss the possibility of a district library. Of the three alternatives available to officials under state law, only the district library option would guarantee equitable funding by township as well as city residents and representation on the library board. On June 24, 1992, the District Library Planning Committee held its first meeting with the goal of planning a structure and funding for a district library serving the majority of Shiawassee County. The committee was comprised of 14 members with Avery Weaver serving as the chairman. Members represented the cities of Owosso and Corunna as well as the townships of Bennington, Caledonia, Owosso, and Rush. By the end of 1993 it was hoped that there would be an agreement to merge the Owosso Public Library, Durand Memorial Library, Corunna Public Library, and the Shiawassee County Library; libraries in Perry, Vernon, and Ovid were not included in the discussions due to a lack of interest on their municipalities' parts. Establishment was scheduled for April 1, 1994 with a 1.25 millage rate to be approved by voters within two years.

On July 1, 1994 the Shiawassee District Library was officially formed. In the end, the district was comprised of the cities of Durand and Owosso and Bennington, Owosso, and Rush

Townships. The City of Corunna and the Shiawassee County Board of Commissioners refused to endorse the plan, and Caledonia Township elected to contract with Corunna for library services. A millage vote was scheduled for August 1995. Each participating governmental unit would now be represented on the library board, too. At about the same time, a fee of \$80 per year per family was established for non-residents of the district.

Also in 1994, the Owosso Public Library received a federal grant under the Library Services and Construction Act in the amount of \$22,000. With the district library agreement in place, an amendment to the original grant proposal allowed Durand Memorial Branch to share in the money. The funds were spent on strengthening the library's book collection, primarily adult non-fiction titles in the areas of science, medicine, business, and technology where very little had been spent in more than a decade. About 1,000 books were purchased and were much appreciated by library users who were finally seeing some new books on the shelves.

At the beginning of August 1995 as Ken Uptigrove celebrated 25 years with the library, the library's millage proposal for 1.25 mills for two years was approved. Voter turnout was light, and only voters in the City of Owosso had more yes than no votes; however, their nearly 2 to 1 ratio in favor of the millage was enough to carry the question. All of the money was to be used to operate the two branches with approximately half designated for books and other materials.

Work was also begun on some of the building concerns in 1992. Both chimneys were removed, and one was rebuilt. Repairs were also made to the roof and eaves as well as new eaves troughs were installed. The elevator was also out of service during much of 1993 after a 10 year old girl stuck her hand through the gate to wave to friends and had her arm caught between the floor of the elevator car and the shaft. Part of the floor had to be cut out in order to free the girl, and the car was eventually replaced with one having an opaque curtain rather than the folding metal gate.

Later in the decade further improvements would be made. The ceiling in the adult library was repaired in 1998, and the carpeting in the children's department was replaced as well as the walls repainted that same year.

In 1998 the City of Owosso would again set aside \$20,000 to study the future of building. Space had become an issue with books being shelved on windowsills, on top of other books, and even on the floor. Room for more Internet accessible computers was also needed as well as storage space. The study, undertaken by a Chicago-based library consultant in February 2000 recommended adding more books, seating, programming space and at least 30,000 square feet; no decision on expanding the existing building or building a larger facility was ever made.

Also in 1993 a new children's librarian was hired in Owosso. Marjorie Cox replaced Trixi Steck who retired; Elizabeth Sumner was promoted from clerk to full-time secretary.

The voted millage was collected for the first time in 1996. Not only were new materials again being purchased on a regular basis, but a new Windows based circulation system known as Athena was installed in Owosso; and would be installed at the Durand Branch the following year; it paved the way for the library's catalog to be made accessible via the Internet in 1999. At the same time, the Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative was turning to OCLC for interlibrary loan access and doing away with LaserGuide.

By 1997, the millage was again up for renewal. This time it passed for five years in all of the participating municipalities. It was also the year which saw a technology explosion in the library world. Owosso's Internet Training Center opened in April, allowing the library to offer small group training on a variety of topics—basic Internet use, genealogical Internet sites, and travel sites were popular topics for these early classes.

Technological change also dominated this decade. In 1995 the library received its first Internet access for the staff. Direct Internet access also became available to patrons for the first time in 1997. Only one terminal was available in Owosso so users were limited to 30 minutes.

The library's web site would become available in 1999, featuring the library catalog and local historical information. Later a calendar of library events and the library newsletter would be added. Access Michigan, a state funded program providing access to several reference databases, also became available in 1997. The first online database, Groliers, to be purchased by the library itself was bought in 1998; additional purchases would be made in the following years.

Programming during the decade was highlighted by a visit from Thomas Mallon when his book *Dewey Defeats Truman* was published in 1997. He spoke to a standing room only crowd about his book and its Owosso setting. Local historian Helen Harrelson had assisted him in his research. Children's summer reading programs and the annual library carnival also continued to attract crowds.

All of the library's problems were not solved, however, with the formation of the district library. Various crises and controversies developed in the new century which had not even been imagined in 1914 or even 1990.

THE 2000'S: A DECADE OF CONTROVERSY

With the dawn of the 21st century, the Shiawassee District Library seemed to be set with solid funding for the first time in its history, but the next decade was to be one of controversy and growing pains.

In May 2000 the Library was the recipient of a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This money provided for four more computers for the public in Owosso, bringing the total to nine computers, plus a printer, and additional software, including some specifically for children. With the increasing use of the Internet and the gradual movement to online accessible reference materials, the new computers were much appreciated. In two more years, the Owosso Branch would offer 11 computers for public use, including those in the children's department.

Earlier in the year, the Shiawassee County surname file was added to the library's web site. Containing county cemetery records, and information compiled by the Shiawassee Genealogical Society, this proved to be immensely popular with those doing genealogical research involving Shiawassee County families.

The first controversy arose in early 2000 when the Owosso City Council decided to loan Frieseke's painting, "Lady With a Sunshade" to the Shiawassee Arts Council. The painting had been given to the city by the artist in 1926, and had been on display at the library since that time. Under the district library agreement, the painting remained the property of the City of Owosso, and in spite of some citizen complaints, it was decided in late February to loan the painting to the Arts Council for a limited period of time. The loan has been extended since the original vote, and the painting is on exhibit at the Arts Council today.

A new circulation desk and staff desks were purchased for the adult department in 2001. These provided staff with access to electricity and the addition of a second computer for

circulation. For the first time in more than 30 years, all full time staff members had their own desks. The additional workspace and computers also allowed for more than one patron to be helped at a time, reducing the need to wait until a staff member could access what was needed. The 1914 era circulation desk was given to the Shiawassee Historical Society and is used as their reception desk.

In August 2001, the library's millage was again up for renewal. This time it passed by 68% but it would also open the door to another controversy. The following year, on the August ballot Rush Township proposed to withdraw from the district library; even though their residents had approved the millage renewal the previous year. Some township residents, especially some of the non-library users and farmers with large acreage, felt that library funding was unfair. Although not allowed by state law, they wanted a flat tax per household rather than the millage based upon property values. This proposal failed with 58% of voters in favor of staying with the district. Then in November, Owosso Township placed a proposal on the ballot to withdraw from the district library; this failed with approximately 81% of the voters voting in favor of staying with the Shiawassee District Library. The Bennington Township board had also been contemplating a similar ballot proposal, but after the idea of withdrawal was defeated in Rush and Owosso Townships, decided not to place the question on the ballot.

However, this was not the end of withdrawal votes. Again in November 2006, Rush Township placed a withdrawal question on the ballot. As in the past, it also failed by almost a 2 to 1 margin. If one or more of these proposals had passed, library funding would have been drastically reduced resulting in a loss of services.

2003 was a particularly busy year for the Library. A grant was received to digitize the *Argus-Press* and make the scanned images available on the Internet. The scanning was completed in 2004, but problems with the interface and indexing have prevented the availability of the images online to this day.

Also during the year, the Library joined INMICH, the forerunner to MeLCat. Patrons could now request books from 20 libraries in Michigan from any Internet accessible computer. They would be shipped to their local library for pickup. In July 2005, INMICH became MeLCat with more libraries joining the project each year; currently more than 400 Michigan public, academic, and school libraries participate.

Staff changes during the decade included the hiring of Katie (Wing) Strittmatter as children's librarian in May 2003 after Marjorie Cox's retirement the previous year. She stayed until 2006 when Erynne Purvis was hired as her replacement. Erynne was the first children's librarian with a master's degree in library science. She resigned at the end of 2008, and Anne (McKay) Clark was hired in January 2009.

Technology continued to improve during these years. In 2004 wireless access became available to library patrons bringing in their own computers, relieving some of the increasing pressure for time on the public Internet access computers. In 2006, the circulation system was again updated, this time to InfoCentre which allowed patrons access to their records and place holds from home via the Internet. The data conversion process took several days, but the library was able to remain open during the transition. Additional computers for the public were also purchased with money from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2006. Additional databases such as BookLetters, Ancestry, and Credo Reference were purchased during the decade as well as new microfilm reader printer in 2006.

In 2006, the library received a bequest from Helen Thome's estate. She had lived in Owosso and been a librarian at the public libraries in Jackson, Saginaw, and Flint. This money was set aside in a restricted endowment fund designated for furniture, equipment, and materials purchases. It is hoped that if the library is ever expanded, this would cover the additional furnishing and shelving which would be needed.

At the end of 2007, Ken Uptigrove retired as director after 38 years with the Library with the intention of pursuing his hobbies of hunting, fishing, travel, and reading. He felt that the

formation of the district library was one of his greatest accomplishments in addition to the improvements to Owosso's building, the implementation of puppet shows, the library carnival and other children's programming, and the naming of Curwood Castle as a literary landmark. He also oversaw the movement from the card catalog to the digital age. In addition to his actual work at the Library, he and his wife established a scholarship fund to aid employees working toward a masters degree in library science or an employee or their children working toward an undergraduate degree. He passed away in August 2012.

In January 2008, Steven Flayer was appointed as the new library director. He had previously worked as the director of library media services at Tri-County schools. One of Flayer's emphases has been to increase the number of programs available to both children and adults, including Wii game sessions and preschool story hours.

Shortly after his arrival, a new library web site was launched highlighting library services rather than serving as a portal to the Internet. Reading suggestions were also included on the new site. Also during the year the library received another Gates Foundation grant which brought the total number of public computers available in Owosso to 15.

Also, about a year after starting in his new position, Flayer and the library board would face a controversy of their own. A citizens group was formed which objected to the library's policy of monitoring Internet use instead of using filters on the workstations. After a number of very long board meetings, the board implemented a new harsher policy near the end of 2009 upon the advice of their attorney. All children in the 8th grade and below would be required to use the computers in the Children's Department unless a parent or legal guardian shared the computer with them in the adult department. Filters were also installed on the 15 public access computers, although patrons could ask that they be disabled on two computers in the Adult Department if they needed to access a blocked site. While this did not satisfy everyone and has created some problems for students who use the library without their parents being present,

most patrons have been able to access what they need and there has been less abuse of library resources.

With the end of the decade, much of the controversy ended also. Change, however, still continued on into the most recent years.

THE 2010'S: CHANGE CONTINUES

Change seems to be never ending in libraries. As the twenty-first century moved into its second decade, technological change is impacting both libraries and the people who use them.

Genealogical research has been popular since Alex Hailey published his book *Roots* in the mid-1970's. However, with increasing gasoline prices and a decline in the economy, the library began seeing fewer researchers in the building while receiving more e-mailed requests for information than in the past. One of the biggest stumbling blocks to providing obituaries was the lack of a name index spanning from the beginning of the microfilmed copies of the *Argus-Press* in 1862 to the present. A project to consolidate all the known indexing (which was generally by either year or at best by decade) into a database which could be accessed from the library's website was begun in 2009 and completed in the summer of 2010. This has become one of the most popular features on the web site with requests for scanned copies of obituaries coming in almost daily. There is still a need for full indexing of the newspaper.

The demand for downloadable e-books and music also grew with the increase in portable technology such as smartphones, laptops, e-readers, and tablets. In 2011, the Library began offering e-books and downloadable audio books through Overdrive; later that year, materials also became available for those with Kindles. By late March 2013, downloadable music tracks also became available through Freegal. Both services require a valid library card issued to a taxpayer of the district and that users set up an account with library staff before using the services the first time.

The increasing popularity of social media has also affected the Library. Accounts have been set up with both Facebook and Twitter which allow staff to promote library events and services on these sites. Patrons are also able to comment on these posts.

In November 2010 another withdrawal question was put before the voters in Bennington Township. Residents opted to remain with the district with approximately 70% voting against the proposal. The following November, the renewal of the library's mileage passed with 65% of voters saying yes.

Changes to staffing during the first part of the decade were limited to the Children's Department. In January 2009, Anne (McKay) Clark was hired as the Children's Librarian. She spent much of her time creating new programs and increasing the number of story hours held during the year. In April 2013 she resigned to accept a similar position with the Bay County Library System and was replaced by Natalie Young.

Programming has become an increasingly important part of library services. A variety of programming is offered for both adults and children, everything from story hours and puppet shows for preschoolers and young children to crafts and computer classes for adults. Visits by authors also remain popular. The library's Internet accessible computers and wi-fi connectivity are used by people of all ages. Edible Book contests have been held in alternate years since 2009 and have attracted some very creative entries.

The space needed for the new technology and programming also remains one of the library's biggest challenges. The demand for new services has not necessarily diminished the need for the circulating book collection. There has been some decrease in the size of the reference collection with the availability of more information online, but at the same time, the number of genealogical resources only available in print has increased. Likewise, nonfiction books are being used less with the ready availability of the Internet & access to MeLCat, but the demand for fiction and other recreational reading is increasing. It has been possible to shift some materials to make room for others, but there is still a shortage of actual floor space, and dedicated room for programs is not available.

Several improvements have also been made to the building during the past few years. Additional insulation was added in 2010; lighting and electrical outlets were added to the study

tables in the adult department the following year. In 2012, the tile roof was fully restored, eliminating leaks which had developed over more than decade. By early 2013, the plaster work which had been damaged by the leaking water was also restored, and the adult library received a coat of fresh paint in the fall. New exterior doors were also hung in 2013.

“What does the future hold?” is a question being asked by many librarians. Additional technological changes are certain, but the printed book (which does not require batteries of electricity) probably will not cease to exist. The library may not be the only source of information, but it remains an important source, particularly for those who do not have or do not want access to the Internet in their homes. The library also remains an important part of the community from the introduction of reading and books to children to recreational reading for older adults. As an institution which dates back to ancient days, the library will continue to change and adapt with the times.

There are also some things which have not changed. Libraries are affected by societal and economic conditions and must be responsive to the needs of their users. Senator Townsend was correct in his speech at the cornerstone laying: “This library is going to send out Knowledge and will give inspiration to the young and old, who come here to read. They will receive education here and education is Necessary to success.”

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APPENDIX B: STAFF MEMBERS

HEAD LIBRARIANS/DIRECTOR

Margaret McBain	1874-1917
Frances Jones	1917-1926
Winifred Rank	1926-1934
Maude Cushman Thompson	1934-1951
Otillia M. Tick	1951-1954
Harold G. "Dick" Johnson	1955-1957
Donald Hendricks	1957-1960
Paul Snowman (interim position)	1960
Helen Mollema	1960-1968
Marcella Britz	1968-1970
Kenneth Uptigrove	1970-2007
Steven Flayer	2008-

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS/DEPARTMENT HEADS

Frances Jones	ca.	1914-1917
Margaret McBain		1917-1921
Mabel Lingle		1921-1925
Bertha Bartholomew		1925-1954
Edith Moulton		1926(?) - 193(?)
Ruth Klingbiel		193(?)
Otillia M. Tick		1946(?) - 1951
Helen Mollema		1957-1960
Marcella Britz	Circ & Reference	1955-1968
	Adult Services	1970-1975
Carolyn Taber	Children's Lib.	1963-1965
Beatrice Steck	Children's Lib.	1965-1992
Rosemary Rice	Adult Services	1976-1978
Al Bryant	Adult Services	1978-1979
Margaret Bentley	Adult Services	1979-
Marjorie Cox	Children's Lib.	1993-2002
Katherine (Wing) Strittmatter	Children's Lib.	2003-2006
Erynne Purvis	Children's Lib.	2006-2008
Anne (McKay) Clark	Children's Lib.	2009-2013
Natalie Young	Children's Lib.	2013-

The following lists include only employees on the regular library payroll who worked for at least six consecutive months. In some cases, the names of employees are unknown.

SUPPORT STAFF (excluding pages)

Prior to 1955

Maude Baldwin

1955-1959

Lillian Bartholmew
Harriet Cunningham
Ernest Goschke
Leo Hedden
Kent Kirby

1960-1969

Margaret Holmes
D.E. Mahoney
William R. Myers
Etta Reed

1970-1979

David Birman
Marcella Britz
Roger Carr
Marjorie Cox
Mary Groesser
Luella Hilden
Delores Koski
Pris Piacek
Mike Salava
William Salava
Judy Schmidt
Michael Scott

1980-1989

Calvin Austin
Nancy Barlage
Marjorie Cox
Barbara Holt
Jane Kirby
Carol Lamphere
Sharon Reinert
Craig Richard
Debbie Schultz
Ed Wesch
Sharon Woodard

1990-1999

Shelley Cavanagh
Elizabeth (Sumner) Fairchild
Jodi Fox
Denise Hall
Sue Huff
Barbara Holt
Shirley Johnson
Joyce Jones
John Klapko
Debbie Pryor
Wendy Spencer
Sharon Woodard

2000-2009

Cynthia Brunger
Donna Carter
Mae Cooley
Elizabeth (Sumner) Fairchild
Jodi Fox
Joseph Hojsak
Barbara Holt
Shirley Johnson
John Klapko
Emma McKnight
Tammy McKay
Chicaro Napier-Hoffman
Erin Reed
Darla Siebert
Cynthia Sizemore
Wendy Spencer
Douglas VanLuven
Harriet Woodby

2000-2014

Cynthia Brunger
Jodi Fox
Joseph Hojsak
Barbara Holt
Chicaro Napier-Hoffman
Darla Siebert
Cynthia Sizemore
Harriet Woodby

Pages

Jeremiah Adamski
Sarah Adams
Austin Adcock
Shelley Allen
Robert Alpers
Sarah Anderson
Maddie Ardelean
James Bates
Sarah Beutel
Jessica Bloomfield
Michael Bloomfield
John Brown
Sharon Bruckman
Sarah Buysse
Shelley Cavanagh
Andrea Cooley
David Davio
Sally DeFields
Fred Dibeau
April Donelson
Patricia Dunkin
Danielle Dunn
Karalyn Eckerle
Meghan Fagan
Stacy Fisher
Kateland Fryfogle
Alaina Furr
Cathy Gabe
Alyssa Gauthier
Bruce Grant
Linda Gulick
Laura Hartsell
Michael Hartsell
Amy Hartson
Sherry Harvey
Amy Hitchingham
Jessica Horvath
Marie Jennings
Rae Ann Jennings
Kerry Kilbourn
Kim Kirby
Suzanne Kirkman
Ruth Klingbiel
Megan Lang
Brenda Lauback
Elizabeth Lupu

Kelsey Lytle
Shelia McClear
Hugh McGrail
Bernadette MacManus
Cheryl Markva
Mike Maxwell
Vicki Mills
William Mollema
Deatta Mueller
Bill Munro
Rebecca Newton
Donna Piacek
Penny Piacek
Priscilla Piacek
Linda Plulik
Debbie Pryor
Tiffany Randall
Erin Reed
Nina Rench
David Rice
Eileen Rice
Mary Jane Rice
Maureen Rice
Rosemary Rice
Susan Rice
Amy Rogers
Diana Rolando
Kelci Rose
Michaela Rose
Mike Salava
William Salava
Kerrisha Sawyer
Janet Scherer
Betty Schirle
Donna Schirle
Leslie Schlaack
Julie Scrimger
Dean Sensabaugh
Justin Siebert
April Skutt
Alicia Smith
Kelly Smith
Ciara Spalding
Andrew Spencer
Deirdre Sprague-Rice
June Stahl
Ann Stechschulte

Diane Stechschulte
Mark Stechschulte
SarahSterchele
Paul Stevens
Shawna Stover
Guy Stuart
Elizabeth Sumner
LeAnne Sysak
Corinne Talbot
Lindsey Tharp
Karen Tkaczyk
Amy Truax
Lauren Van Loon
David Vandermark

Danielle Walker
Diane Walker
William Wells
John Westcott
Chris Whisman
Vearl Wilkinson
Aimee Wilson
Emily Wilson
Melissa Winkler
Kathleen Winters
Lyndsey Young
Sarah Zimmerman

APPENDIX C- BOARD MEMBERS

* Dean Davis	ca.	1953-1957
J. L. Rooney	ca.	1953-1954
Mrs. R. L. Chase	ca.	1953-1954
Ruth Wood	ca.	1953-1957
Mrs. Gerald McClear	ca.	1953-1959
Richard Gutheridge		1954-1955
J.H. Grover		1954-1955
Mrs. Walter Howe		1954-1960
* Claud Cope		1954-1963
* Robert Shabaz		1956-1959
* Glenn Baumhardt		1956-1960
Mrs. William Watson		1957-1958
* George W. Campbell		1957-1960
Mrs. George Carter		1959-1960
Margaret Lynch		1959-1962
Mrs. Stanley Day		1959-1964
William Munro		1960-1964
Herbert Dreher		1960-1965
Thelma Shaw		1960-1967
* Jack Bremer		1960-1965
* Mrs. Leonard LaPonsey		1962-1966
Clifford Wolcott		1963-1965
John Newby		1965-1968
* Joseph Romeo		1965-1967
* Dorthea Grebel		1965-1984
* Jack Harris		1965-1985
Florence Lyons		1966-1982
William Vanderbilt		1967-1968
Mrs. Frederick Wallace		1967-1969
* Harlon Mark		1967-1983
Margaret Seats		1970-1982
Anne Link		1982-1985
Penny Miller		1982-1991
* Jake Groeneveld		1984-1994
Lucille Couzynse		1984-1994, 2003-2012
William Aue		1985-1988
* Thomas Phaneuf		1985-1995
Evelyn Kraatz		1988-1990
Barbara Bronson		1988-1995
Ginny Smith		1989-1994
Marcia Oliver		1991-1994
* Kim Omer		1994-2002
* Pam Allen		1994-1997
Karen Coon		1994-1997
* Catherine Campbell		1994-1996, 2011-
* Becky Landris		1994-2008

Lorraine Weckwert	1994-1997
* James Greve	1995-2000
Robert Teich, Jr.	1995-2005, 2010-
Harlan Caszatt	1996-2003
Marti Galesk	1997-1999
Joyce Zick	1997-1999
* Bonnie Mann	1998-2006
Joan Marroso	1999-2000
Frank Gregory	2000-2008
Christine Mitchell	2000-2003
* Barbara Greve	2002-2010
Norma Babcock	2003-2010
Charles Kincaid	2003-2011
* David Harrelson	2005-2010
* Travis Senk	2006-2011
Beverly Adcock	2008-2010
Ann Zick	2008-2009
Edmund Humphrey	2010-
Donald Smith	2010-
Robert Smith	2009-
Denice Grace	2011-
Rosemary Schultz	2013-
Tom Smith	2013-

* Served as board chairperson during part of their term.

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