

## A STUDY OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY MOVEMENT IN IOWA

Ever since writing was invented there have been collections of books. Printing multiplied the number of volumes, but it was not until the nineteenth century, when public education became general, that people began to dream of local public libraries offering books to all.

The founders of Iowa were well aware of the need for books and the Organic Act of the new Territory made an appropriation of \$5000 for the purchase of a library to be used by the Territorial officers.

Such libraries were not, of course, accessible to the citizens in general. Nor could the ordinary pioneer afford to buy any number of books. The Bible, McGuffey's readers, and an almanac furnished the reading in many homes. The Iowa settlers were, however, believers in education and they desired books for their own pleasure and for the use of their children. How were the needed books to be secured?

### ASSOCIATION AND SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES

The early settlers in Iowa were interested in libraries. Indeed efforts were made to establish libraries before Iowa was established as a Territory or even named. The *Dubuque Visitor* for June 8, 1836, carried a notice that citizens favorable to the formation of a Library Association should

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assemble at the Methodist meeting house on the tenth of June, at 4 P. M. The editor added this comment:

We respectfully invite the attention of the citizens of Du Buque, to an advertisement in this day's paper, calling a meeting for the purpose of forming a Library Association.—The importance of such institutions is so well known, that any remarks from us would seem superfluous. We cannot forbear mentioning, however, that similar associations are formed in almost every thriving town in our country; and their influence on the moral and intellectual character of the inhabitants, is universally acknowledged. When facilities exist for obtaining books, a taste for reading is imperceptibly acquired; and as virtue and knowledge are almost inseparably [sic] connected, it is generally found that persons enjoying the privileges of a library association, gradually become assimilated in habits of virtue and refinement of manners. We confidently believe that the citizens will cordially unite in building up the institution.

Whether this Library Association was formed or ever functioned the paper seems not to have reported. Probably there was too much interest in government and in business for the men to pay much attention to books.

As early as 1839, however, Iowa planted the library thought in her laws. At the first session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa, an act for "the incorporation of public Libraries" was enacted. The inhabitants of any city, town, village, or neighborhood, in the Territory were authorized to assemble for the purpose of holding a library election whenever the community had subscribed one hundred dollars for a public library. Money was to be obtained by selling shares. Having selected a chairman and clerk, the shareholders could proceed to elect seven directors, one of whom should be appointed president, and to agree upon the name of the library. The board of directors was given power to make by-laws for the regulation of the library and to levy a tax on the shareholders, not to exceed one dollar per share in any one year. A ma-



majority of two-thirds of the shareholders could, however, at the annual meeting, increase the annual tax to any amount not exceeding five dollars on each share in any one year. The directors were to appoint a treasurer and a librarian and might receive donations.<sup>1</sup>

No library associations have been found for some fifteen years after the enactment of this law and the later laws and codes of Iowa disregard the subject — except as such associations came under the general incorporation laws — until after the Civil War when the public library movement began in earnest.

The “public Libraries” mentioned in this law were not tax-supported libraries, but association or subscription libraries, and a number of them were incorporated, either under this law or under the general incorporation act. A complete history of the private library associations in Iowa would require too much time and space, but sufficient material on this matter is available to illustrate how such libraries grew up and merged into the tax-supported libraries of today. Membership in these association or subscription libraries was secured by buying shares or, more generally, by paying annual dues which varied from one dollar to three dollars.

*Fairfield.*— The first library of this kind in Iowa seems to have been at Fairfield, where the Jefferson County Library was founded in 1853 as a subscription library with 527 books on the shelves. The library gradually increased in size and importance, shifting from one location to another, until 1893, when United States Senator James F. Wilson, who had shown great interest in the library, was instrumental in inducing Andrew Carnegie to donate \$40,000 for a library building. It was the first Carnegie li-

<sup>1</sup> *Laws of the Territory of Iowa, 1838-1839*, pp. 252-254.

brary erected west of Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, and was one of the few established without any conditions as to support by the community. Up to 1900 the library was supported by annual dues, fines, entertainments, and contributions, and each year it became more burdensome to those who felt responsible for its growth. In 1899 an election was held which resulted in making it a tax-supported public library, known as the Fairfield Free Public Library.<sup>2</sup>

*Davenport.*— The original Library Association of Davenport<sup>3</sup> was formed in the early fifties, its early promoter and patron being General George B. Sargent, who brought with him his New England notions concerning the value of libraries. The association continued its work until the hard times of 1857-1858 forced it to suspend, the books being stored in the basement of Cook & Sargent's banking house. The library was reopened the next year through the efforts of F. H. Griggs. The organization had a precarious existence, the library being sometimes open and sometimes closed, occupying successively a room in Merwin's Block, Second and Perry, Griggs's Block, Third and Perry, Cutter's Block, Second and Brady, and the Methodist Church Building, Fifth and Brady. The library contained about 1000 volumes, one-third of which were public documents. For ten years preceding 1872 the library was in charge of

<sup>2</sup> Julia A. Robinson's *Iowa Library Facilities* (Reprinted from *Iowa Industrial Survey*), p. 1; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 14, 89. Part II of this report is entitled *Free Public Libraries of Iowa. Historical Sketches*.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of the early library work at Davenport see the *Davenport Daily Times*, June 20, 21, 1923; J. F. Dillon's *Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Free Public Library* (Davenport, May 11, 1904), pp. 23, 24, 25, 26, 48, 49, 55; *Davenport Democrat and Leader*, June 20, 1923; T. W. Koch's *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (1917), pp. 172, 173; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 81, 82; Mrs. J. J. Richardson's *The Davenport Free Public Library in the Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. I, p. 43.



an organization of young men known as the Associated Congress. Miss Sarah Allen was librarian.

In 1873-1874 the women of Davenport were invited to assume the management of the library and since that time it has functioned continuously. Credit has been given to Mrs. Maria Purdy Peck for the progress made following her election to the presidency of the group in 1872. In 1874 Mrs. Anna Price Dillon was president. Coöperating with others in 1877, Mrs. Dillon enlisted the interest of Mrs. Clarissa C. Cook, whose husband, the late Ebenezer Cook, some years before had made a conditional bequest of \$10,000 for a library building, the terms of which had not been carried out. The association obtained subscriptions which enabled it to purchase a lot, thus fulfilling the condition of the bequest, and on November 6, 1877, the cornerstone of a new library building was laid on the well-known site on Brady Street.

In 1899 Miss Alice French (Octave Thanet), a resident of Davenport and a personal friend of Andrew Carnegie, wrote to him and asked him to aid the association. Mr. Carnegie offered to give \$50,000 for a library building, provided the city would purchase a suitable site and agree to maintain a library at a cost of at least \$4000 per year. The offer was presented to the city council in January, 1900, and was unanimously accepted. At the municipal election in April the electors voted to establish a free public library and to authorize the city council to levy a tax for the purchase of a site for a free public library. A tax of one-fourth of a mill for five years was voted to pay for a library site and an additional tax of one-half mill was levied for maintenance. This provided an income of \$7,181.92, almost double the amount required. A board of trustees was then appointed and they selected a site near the business center of the city, costing \$19,200. The tax not being sufficient to

pay for the site, the city council promptly voted the balance from the city funds. When plans for a building were submitted it was found that \$50,000 was not sufficient to erect a building that would meet the growing needs of the city. A second appeal was made to Mr. Carnegie through Judge John F. Dillon of New York, a former resident of Davenport, and he generously offered to increase his gift to \$75,000 if the city would provide \$7500 for annual maintenance. The terms were readily accepted.

*Iowa City.*—In November, 1856, residents of Iowa City organized the Citizens' Library Association. The dues were \$2.00 per year and entitled the member to the use of the reading room. He might also extend this privilege for two weeks to a friend "temporarily in the city". In addition to the membership dues, the association sponsored lectures as a possible source of income, the lecturers for 1856-1857 including Horace Greeley and John G. Saxe. Financially this plan seems to have been a partial failure for the committee reported receipts of \$551.28 and expenditures of \$620.95, the deficit being made up by a few interested citizens. This association library seems later to have been abandoned and it was not until 1897 — forty years later — that the Iowa City Public Library began.<sup>4</sup>

*Cedar Falls.*—In 1859 the Cedar Valley Horticultural and Literary Association was incorporated at Cedar Falls. A committee was appointed to secure a library which reported that same year a collection of fifty volumes in addition to the *Annals of Congress*. In 1865 this organization merged with the Library Association of Cedar Falls. The library prospered until March, 1871, when it was completely

<sup>4</sup> *Reports of the President and other Officers of the Citizens' Library Association (Iowa City), 1857; Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903, pp. 99, 100.*



destroyed by fire, only the books in circulation escaping. Library subscribers having books were requested to return them to the postmaster. With this nucleus and a private library purchased for \$300 the library continued to function. New articles or incorporation were filed in August, 1871. After 1871 the library had a well supplied reading room and was well patronized. In 1877 the library trustees requested the city to vote upon the question of maintaining a free public library as provided by the laws of Iowa. The vote carried, and in 1878 the association turned over to the city 1301 books and the property of the subscription library. It was the third free tax-supported library established as provided by law, the first one being the Independence Free Public Library established in 1873 and the second the Osage Free Public Library established in 1875.<sup>5</sup>

*Keokuk.*—The Keokuk Library Association was incorporated in December, 1863, as a stock association, after two former attempts to provide a library had failed. Shares of stock sold for ten dollars; life membership was fifty dollars; annual dues two dollars; subscription fees three dollars. The library opened in 1864, with four life members, one hundred and eighty-one stockholders, and about 2500 volumes on the shelves. For a number of years the association received most of its income from entertainments given by the women of the city and from lecture courses. In 1879 a bequest of \$10,000 was left to the Keokuk Library Association by J. L. Rice. This formed the nucleus of a fund for the erection of a library building. An

<sup>5</sup> Letter to the writer from Mary O. Stuart, Librarian of the Cedar Falls Public Library, dated May 7, 1929; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 72, 97; Luella M. Wright's *The Cedar Falls Parlor Reading Circle* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 342; George D. Perkins's address, *Dedication Carnegie-Dayton Library, Cedar Falls, Iowa* (September 24, 1903); Wright's *The Mind and the Soil* in *The Palimpsest*, Vol. XVII, pp. 373-394.

art loan exhibition was given by the women and a large number of shares of stock, with privilege of free use of the library for ten years, were sold, a sufficient sum being realized to enable the Association to erect a building costing \$25,000, with a debt of \$5000. This was opened to the public in February, 1883, and was the first library in the State to have a home of its own. The library was on the second floor, the first floor being rented as office rooms. The association struggled along until 1892 when it was able to announce that all debts had been paid. In 1894 the citizens of Keokuk voted for a free tax-supported library and that same year the library was opened for the use of the public as the Keokuk Public Library. During its first year as a free public library, the users of the library increased from 383 to 2494, and the number of books issued from 8169 volumes to 52,333 volumes. The librarian was paid \$100 per year. These figures indicate the far greater usefulness of the free public library over that of the subscription library.<sup>6</sup>

*Dubuque.*—The foundation of what is now the Dubuque Public Library was laid in the early 1860's. The undertaking was on a small scale and was carried on by volunteer aid. After passing through various stages this library at last became a well arranged subscription library under the control of the Young Men's Library Association. It was supported partly by membership fees and entertainments but mainly through generous subscriptions from citizens of the town. An appeal was made to Mr. Carnegie in 1900 by Jacob Rich, the president of the Young Men's Library Association, and by United States Senator William B. Allison. Mr. Carnegie offered the city \$50,000 for a library building,

<sup>6</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 103, 104; *Historical Sketch* (Keokuk, 1865); *Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Keokuk Library Association with a Historical Sketch* (Keokuk, 1866).



provided the city would fulfill certain conditions as to future support, and later increased his gift by \$10,000. The city voted favorably for the tax supported library, and the Young Men's Library Association donated to the city its library of about 14,000 volumes and property valued at about \$10,000. In 1902 the new library building was completed and was formally accepted by the city, and the Carnegie-Stout Library began its regular work as a free public library.<sup>7</sup>

*Sioux City.*— In February, 1865, a meeting of citizens of Sioux City<sup>8</sup> was held for the purpose of forming a library association. A resolution was adopted to organize a body corporate for the purpose of establishing a public library to be known as the Sioux City Library Association, and persons were appointed to act as trustees of the organization of the contemplated corporation. The library association seems to have met with difficulty as no further mention of it was made until the following November. The *Sioux City Journal* of November 18, 1865, reported a meeting held and a board of trustees chosen who organized and appointed a librarian and corresponding secretary. The association, however, remained a myth until the organization of the Young Men's Literary Association.

There had come to Sioux City many young men, newly from college, young lawyers with little as yet to do in a professional way. This group formed themselves into a society for the practice of literary expression. Most of them had

<sup>7</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 84, 85.

<sup>8</sup> For the early history of the Sioux City Library see *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 124; *Sioux City Daily Tribune*, December 11, 1915; *Sioux City Journal*, June 5, 1924; *Library Development (Sioux City Public Library)* in *The Fairmount Park Branch of the Public Library (Sioux City)*, unpagged; *The Sioux City Public Library (Report for 1906, sketch of history and development)*, p. 15; *Library Journal*, Vol. LII, pp. 966-968; *Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. VI, pp. 109, 110, Vol. IX, pp. 71-74.

brought with them only a few books, and they found they did not have the reference volumes they needed. The *Journal* of May 21, 1868, reported that the Young Men's Literary Association was about to be organized and a library purchased for the benefit of its members, which was to be accessible at all times. On October 26, 1869, a meeting was held "to initiate a movement for the formation of a Young Men's Association". Another meeting was held on November second and a constitution and by-laws were adopted. The records state that its object was "to establish and maintain a library and reading room, to secure literary and scientific lectures, and in other ways to improve the literary tastes of its members".

Officers and directors were elected and the work of collecting a library was begun at once. Lecture courses were given and the proceeds, together with the membership fees, annual dues, and donations constituted the resources for the establishment of the library. A room was secured in the county auditor's office in the Hubbard Block, and the library was opened to the public on March 19, 1870, with 325 books on the shelves.

At the municipal election held in March, 1875, a proposal to organize a public library under the State law was voted upon and carried by a small majority. Two years later, on May 21, 1877, the city council passed an ordinance to establish and maintain a public library. The Young Men's Literary Association gave to the municipality of Sioux City its library of about six hundred well selected volumes, with certain conditions of maintenance which were fulfilled. The books were at first placed in the office of the city clerk, who had charge of their circulation.

The library was located in the Davis Block from 1877 to 1881, then after moving three times, was installed in a library building built by the city. In 1891 an organization



of citizens was incorporated as the Library and Building Association, which contracted to supply a building for the library containing space to be rented to the city for offices. The building was erected at the northwest corner of Sixth and Douglas Streets. It was completed at a cost of \$122,000 and was occupied in the summer of 1892. In 1899 the Library and Building Association transferred the building to the city.

*Des Moines.*—The plan for the establishment of a public library in Des Moines<sup>9</sup> originated in 1866 in the mind of a young lawyer of the city, Hiram Y. Smith, who had taken his course of professional study in the Law School of Albany, New York, where he had access to the fine State Library. He returned to Des Moines imbued with a spirit of appreciation of library privileges and thoroughly convinced of their value to any community. Upon Mr. Smith's suggestion, Colonel Gordon A. Stewart, a prominent lawyer of the city, prepared a paper setting forth the plans and purposes of a proposed library movement. This paper was circulated to obtain the signatures of those willing to extend aid to the new enterprise. The first signature received was that of Colonel C. H. Gatch, who was associated with Colonel Stewart in the practice of law and later president of the library's board of trustees. The next signature was Mr. Smith's and following his, Colonel Stewart's. Within a few days 131 additional names were secured. The paper circulated read as follows:

We, the undersigned, agree to form ourselves into a corporation to be known as the "Young Men's Association of the City of Des

<sup>9</sup> For details of the beginnings of the Des Moines Public Library, see Ella M. McLoney's *Historical Sketch of the Des Moines Public Library* (1893), pp. 3-16; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 83, 84; Gentiliska Winterrowd's *Des Moines Libraries in Des Moines*, Vol. III, pp. 12-18 (October, 1918).

Moines," for the purpose of permanently establishing a reading room and library . . . . And we further agree to pay such sums for membership as may be determined upon by the Association, not to exceed four dollars per annum, thirty dollars for ten years, or fifty dollars for life.<sup>10</sup>

The first meeting was held on December 13th in the Methodist Church and was largely attended not only by those who had signed the agreement, but also by many who had not had an opportunity to sign, but who were interested in the movement. Four days later a second meeting was held. Articles of incorporation were adopted and the new body was named the "Des Moines Library Association". The payment of fifty dollars in cash, books, or other property purchased a life membership, twenty-five dollars a membership for ten years, fifteen dollars for five years, and four dollars for one year. Officers and six directors were to be elected annually. On January 16, 1867, the articles of incorporation were filed for record.

Rooms were rented over B. F. Allen's bank, in a brick building on the southeast corner of Court Avenue and Fourth Street. Some time was spent in collecting books donated and purchasing others and fitting the rooms for use. In August, 1867, C. A. Dudley, a young lawyer, was appointed librarian, and the library was opened to the public in September with about 2300 books on its shelves and with thirty newspapers and magazines in the reading room. Mr. Dudley held the position one year and then resigned. He was made a life member of the Association "in consideration and recognition of the valuable services rendered to the association" during his term as librarian.

The association struggled along for several years on an uncertain income received from the sale of membership tickets, the giving of entertainments and lecture courses,

<sup>10</sup> McLoney's *Historical Sketch of the Des Moines Public Library* (1893), p. 4.



and occasional private subscriptions. In May, 1876, a number of public-spirited women of the city met with the directors to devise some plan by which new life might be infused into the library. After considering the situation the women of the city consented to take charge of the library for a period of five years. Their first efforts were directed toward canceling the indebtedness of the Library Association. Citizens responded generously to requests for aid and the debt was soon paid. The library was then removed to rooms in "Art Block" on Fourth Street near Court Avenue, owned by Conrad Youngerman, a place more conveniently arranged for library purposes.

From May, 1877, to May, 1878, the library was in charge of the Young Men's Christian Association, though still under the general supervision of the women interested. In May, 1878, the board of directors decided to apply to the city council for a library appropriation, and five hundred dollars for the use of the library was voted to be paid annually from the city fund. Even with the help from the city, the financial problem proved difficult. In May, 1882, at the regular annual meeting, the stockholders passed a resolution that the association should turn over to the city all its books and other property in trust upon condition that the city maintain a free library. In August the city council, by ordinance, accepted the trust and provided for the establishment, maintenance, and management of a city library. In October the association held a final meeting, confirming the proposition previously made to transfer the library to the city.

The Library Association had several different librarians during its lifetime, most of them serving but a short time. For a time the library was under the general charge of John Weldon, with the title of "manager", who planned and supervised various entertainments (including the op-

era, "Belshazzar") for the purpose of securing funds for the library association, the proceeds of which were shared equally between himself and the library.

*Council Bluffs.*—The first attempt to form a library in Council Bluffs was made by the Young Men's Library Association in 1866, with D. C. Bloomer as chairman. Several hundred books were collected all of which were destroyed by fire in 1867. In 1869 the High School Library Association was organized, later incorporated as the Public School Library. In 1873 the library combined with the Young Men's Christian Association. A room was donated free of rent, W. T. Robinson of the Young Men's Christian Association giving his services as librarian. This arrangement lasted for five years. In 1878 the Council Bluffs Library Association was formed. As there was some difficulty in collecting money, the women of the city were — as usual — called upon for help. They enlarged the subscription list, gave entertainments for the benefit of the library, increased the number of books and made the reading room attractive. The city council allowed fifteen dollars a month for rent and the use of a room was donated, the money allowed being used for the purchase of books. In 1881 the city voted to levy a tax for the support of the library and the library was thereupon turned over to the city, being opened as a free public library in 1882.<sup>11</sup>

The income secured by these association and subscription libraries was uncertain. It was derived from the sale of shares and from annual dues, supplemented by funds raised by entertainments and lectures and by donations.

<sup>11</sup> For the story of the beginnings of the Council Bluffs Public Library see the *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 80, 81, and M. F. Davenport's *Historical Sketch of the Council Bluffs Free Public Library* (1893).



The subscription library at Burlington, established in 1868, sold 300 shares of stock at ten dollars each and required subscribers to pay three dollars per year for the privilege of drawing books from the library. James W. Grimes contributed \$5000. In 1885 the library was turned over to the city, Philip M. Crapo having secured the payment of the debt.<sup>12</sup>

The Ladies' Library Association of Cherokee charged a membership fee of five dollars and one dollar per year was charged to readers, not members of the Association.<sup>13</sup> The membership fee in the Occidental Library Association of Mason City was five dollars and the annual dues three dollars.<sup>14</sup> The Ladies' Library Association of Mount Pleasant charged a low fee for the privilege of taking out books, but the reading room was open to the public entirely free.<sup>15</sup> The association library of Marshaltown sold book cards to stockholders for one dollar and fifty cents per year, and to others for two dollars and fifty cents.<sup>16</sup> Shareholders in the Ottumwa Library Association paid an annual fee of three dollars, others four dollars. Dues were later reduced to two dollars and the library became free when the Tourist Club (made up of women) took charge of it in 1897, though it did not become a public library until 1900.<sup>17</sup> For many years the Missouri Valley Library Association was supported by the sale of tickets and weekly book rentals.<sup>18</sup>

Most of the libraries were located in rooms rented or donated for the purpose. Some maintained reading rooms,

<sup>12</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 71.

<sup>13</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 77.

<sup>14</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 110.

<sup>15</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 109.

<sup>17</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 119.

<sup>18</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 111.

others circulated books, and still others carried on both types of library activities. In some towns volunteers looked after the library; in others a member of the association was elected or appointed as librarian. No definite information can be found concerning the compensation received by those in charge of most of these libraries. In 1890 a person was appointed to care for the Algona library for three months and in return for this service received a yearly ticket.<sup>19</sup> At Ottumwa the librarian's salary is said to have varied from one hundred dollars a year to nothing.<sup>20</sup> In some instances mention is made of the employment of a librarian, but the amount of compensation is not given.

As public interest in libraries increased and public funds became available the need for privately supported libraries decreased. Under the library law passed in 1872 five free public libraries were established in Iowa in the seventies and ten in the eighties. However, the association or subscription type of library predominated until about 1893. The *Iowa Official Register* for 1893 listed 15 free public libraries in the State supported by municipal tax and 16 subscription libraries. This was the first attempt to gather the library statistics of the State and the list was incomplete as many libraries did not report. The first report of the Iowa Library Commission published in 1903 listed 77 free public libraries while the *Iowa Official Register* for 1903 reported 32 association and subscription libraries. The greatest progress has been made in the establishment of free public libraries since 1900. In 1936, 196 free public libraries were reported. There were also a number of association and subscription libraries. Many of the free public libraries began as association or subscription libraries, and were later given to the town or city to form a nucleus

<sup>19</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 67.

<sup>20</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 119.



for the new public library supported by taxation. From information available it seems that only one of these, the Young Men's Association Library of Lyons, retains the name of the founding society.<sup>21</sup>

#### PUBLIC LIBRARY LEGISLATION IN IOWA

Mention has already been made of the Iowa law of 1839 authorizing the incorporation of "public Libraries" which were really association or subscription libraries. The school law adopted in January, 1840, also made provision for a tax to be used for a school library. At that session also the Iowa legislature passed an act providing for the appointment of a librarian for the Territorial Library, Congress having made an appropriation in the Organic Act of 1838 creating the Territory of Iowa of \$5000 for a reference library to be used by the officials of the new Territory.<sup>22</sup>

For thirty years after the enactment of these laws, libraries were not included among the subjects of legislation nor was the law of 1839 included in the *Code of 1850* or the *Revision of 1860*. It was not until 1870 that an act was passed by the Iowa General Assembly authorizing the city council of any city of the first or second class to establish a free public library and to levy an annual tax not exceeding one-half a mill on each dollar of taxable property in the city for the purpose of maintaining it, provided a suitable lot and building should first be donated to the city for a library.

<sup>21</sup> *Ought Iowa to Have a Library Commission?* (Report of Special Committee of the Iowa Library Association, 1900), p. 6; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1932-1934*, pp. 6, 7; Patterson's *American Educational Directory*, 1930, p. 799; data furnished by Julia A. Robinson, Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission, November 6, 1936.

<sup>22</sup> *Laws of the Territory of Iowa, 1838-1839*, pp. 252-254, 1839-1840, Ch. 23, pp. 28, 29, Ch. 73, p. 103; Johnson Brigham's *A Library in the Making* (1913), p. 6. For a survey of Iowa library laws before 1892 see Charles Aldrich's *Iowa Library Legislation* in the *Library Journal*, Vol. XVII, pp. 163, 164.

The act authorized the city to receive such donations and the city council was to appoint trustees.<sup>23</sup>

The Fourteenth General Assembly passed a new act in 1872 to provide for the establishment of free public libraries in cities and incorporated towns and repealed so much of the act passed in 1870 as conflicted with this act. Any city or incorporated town desiring to accept the benefits of this act had first to submit to a vote of the people at a municipal election the question "Shall the city or town council (as the case may be) accept the benefit of an act of the legislature for the creation and maintenance of a free public library?" If the vote was favorable the city council was authorized to appropriate money for the maintenance of the library, for the purchase of land, the erection of buildings or the hiring of buildings or suitable rooms, and for the salaries of employees, but the amount appropriated in any one year was not to exceed one mill on each dollar of assessed valuation. The city or town was authorized to accept gifts, donations, or bequests made for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, or improving the library.<sup>24</sup>

A law passed in 1888 gave cities of the first class organized as such since January 1, 1885, which had accepted the benefits of the provisions of the act of 1872, power to levy a tax not exceeding three mills on the dollar to pay any indebtedness that might have been, or might be contracted for the purchase of lands, the erection of buildings for a public library, or the hiring of rooms or buildings for such purposes, or for compensation of employees. This law was, apparently, enacted for the benefit of Sioux City which became a city of the first class in 1886.<sup>25</sup>

In 1894 the law concerning public libraries was amended

<sup>23</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1870, Ch. 45.

<sup>24</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1872 (General and Public Acts), Ch. 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1888, Ch. 18.



to authorize the council or trustees to "assess levy and tax" instead of to "appropriate" for the support of the public library. In any city or town which already had a public library or might thereafter establish one, a board of library trustees of nine members was to be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the council. Three were to be appointed every two years, the term of office, after the first, being six years. These trustees were unpaid. They were given control of the public library and its funds, were authorized to appoint the librarian, to purchase books, and to make the necessary regulations concerning library administration, and they were required to submit a report annually to the city council. The library board also decided on the tax levy to be made, although this might not exceed one mill on the dollar, except that in cities of the first class which came under the special act of 1888, a higher tax (3 mills) might be imposed. The actual appropriation and tax levy was, however, made by the city council.<sup>26</sup>

At this session, too, an act was passed, apparently for the benefit of Burlington, legalizing assessments of the library tax in any city of the first class incorporated under the general law and having a population in 1875 of not less than 19,000.<sup>27</sup> All cities of the first class were also authorized to levy and collect an additional tax of 3 mills on the dollar to pay the interest on indebtedness already incurred for the purchase of real estate or hereafter incurred or for the construction of a library building, and to create a sinking fund to retire such indebtedness.<sup>28</sup>

The Twenty-sixth General Assembly revised this law to make the authority of the board of library trustees more

<sup>26</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1894, Chs. 41, 43. See also G. W. Wakefield's *Iowa Library Legislation* in the *Library Journal*, Vol. XIX, pp. 331-333.

<sup>27</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1894, Ch. 42.

<sup>28</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1894, Ch. 99. This act was slightly amended in 1896 by adding the word "annually".—*Laws of Iowa*, 1896, Ch. 5.

definite. In cities of the first class the tax levy for maintenance was limited to one mill on each dollar of taxable valuation while cities of the second class and towns were allowed to levy up to two mills for this purpose. Cities acting under Chapter 99 of the *Laws of 1894* were authorized to levy not to exceed three mills on the dollar to be used to pay for the site and building needed for the library. A special act authorized any city acting under a special charter to use a public park or public square as the site of a public library.<sup>29</sup>

The *Code of 1897* contained a restatement of the law concerning public libraries with some change in meaning. In some way the section on the library tax levy was so stated that cities of the first class having a population of 25,000 or over were authorized to assess an annual tax of one mill for library maintenance purposes, cities of the second class and towns could levy two mills for this purpose, while special charter cities were allowed only one-half a mill. This apparently left cities of the first class with a population of less than 25,000 without any levy for maintenance. The maximum levy for building purposes was three mills in first class cities with a population of over 25,000, and one mill in special charter cities. Other municipalities were evidently not supposed to have buildings.<sup>30</sup>

The following year the Twenty-seventh General Assembly amended the Code to give special charter cities a maximum levy of one mill for library maintenance.<sup>31</sup>

In 1900 the library tax provision was simplified by an amendment to Sec. 732 of the *Code of 1897*. All cities of the first class having a population of 25,000 or over might levy a tax of one mill for library maintenance. All other

<sup>29</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1896, Chs. 50, 51.

<sup>30</sup> *Code of 1897* Secs. 732, 894, 953, 1005(6).

<sup>31</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1898, Ch. 28 (2).



cities and towns might levy as much as two mills for maintenance. The tax levy for library building purposes was limited to three mills in all cities and towns. City councils, including the councils of special charter cities, however, were authorized to cut the levy if they saw fit. Library trustees were authorized to make provision for the use of libraries by non-residents and to fix charges for such use.<sup>32</sup>

The library tax law as set forth in Sec. 732 of the Code was again amended in 1902. This amendment fixed two mills as the maximum levy for public library maintenance in all cities and towns, including special charter cities. Another act approved at this session authorized library trustees in any city or town to condemn land for library purposes.<sup>33</sup>

The 1902 restatement of the library tax law applied only to Sec. 732 of the *Code of 1897*. As amended this section conflicted with Sec. 894, and the General Assembly in 1904 changed Sec. 894 to make it conform to the previously amended Sec. 732. The Thirtieth General Assembly also authorized the council of any city, town, or special charter city where the mulct law was in force to appropriate not to exceed 20 per cent of the mulct tax for the benefit of the public library, including the purchase of books and furniture.<sup>34</sup>

The Thirtieth General Assembly in 1904 also made provision for coöperation between municipalities and colleges and universities in the matter of library maintenance. Such agreements were not to provide for a contribution by the city or town of an amount greater than that allowed by law. The board of library trustees might elect a library trea-

<sup>32</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1900, Chs. 20, 21, 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1902, Chs. 35, 36, 50. For a summary of these laws see the *Supplement to the Code of Iowa, 1902*, Secs. 732, 732-a.

<sup>34</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1904, Chs. 25, 38.

surer, to whom the city treasurer was to pay over the library funds. Such joint undertakings as had already been undertaken were legalized.<sup>35</sup>

A penal law passed in 1904 also declared that any person who wilfully, maliciously, or wantonly tore, defaced, mutilated, injured, or destroyed in part or whole public library books or property should be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and fined not more than one hundred dollars, or imprisoned not more than thirty days.<sup>36</sup>

The Thirty-first General Assembly made some important changes in the laws of the State concerning the rate of taxation for public libraries. An act was passed repealing Sec. 732 of the Code and Ch. 38 of the *Laws of Iowa*, 1904, and providing for an increase in the maximum tax levy for library maintenance in all cities and incorporated towns having a population of not more than six thousand, from two mills on the dollar to three mills. Other cities continued with a maximum two mill levy for maintenance. In all cities and towns a maximum of three mills could be levied for the purchase of real estate, the erection of buildings, and for indebtedness incurred in establishing a public library. The library trustees were also given control of any funds derived from gifts.<sup>37</sup>

A law was passed by the Thirty-second General Assembly in 1907, applying to cities under the commission plan of government. It provided that the council of such a city should, at its first meeting, or as soon as practicable thereafter, elect by majority vote three library trustees. This law was amended in 1913 by the Thirty-fifth General Assembly and the number of library trustees was changed from three to five (except in cities which before had main-

<sup>35</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1904, Ch. 24.

<sup>36</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1904, Ch. 131.

<sup>37</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1906, Chs. 14, 21.



tained a library under a lease or contract fixing a different number of trustees) and the board of trustees was authorized to exercise all powers possessed by library boards in cities not organized under the commission plan of government. The five trustees were to be appointed by the mayor at the first meeting of the council, or as soon as practicable thereafter, for a term of five years.<sup>38</sup>

The Thirty-third General Assembly amended the law concerning the levy of the tax for libraries by striking out the words giving the city council power to levy only so much of the tax certified to it by the library board as it "may deem necessary". The effect of this amendment was to require city councils to levy the tax requested by library boards up to the maximum limit.<sup>39</sup>

Another act passed by the Thirty-fifth General Assembly in 1913 raised the maximum rate of taxation for library maintenance to five mills on the dollar in all cities and incorporated towns and allowed a maximum of three mills for the purchase of real estate, erection of library buildings, or for payment on indebtedness incurred in establishing a public library. The rate of taxation was to be fixed by the board of trustees and certified to the city council which should levy the tax.<sup>40</sup>

Another enactment provided that when a library building was completed and paid for and a balance remained in the library building fund, the library trustees were authorized to transfer the balance to the maintenance fund, but the Assembly specifically provided that this law should not be interpreted to authorize a levy of a tax for building purposes after the library was erected with the intention of

<sup>38</sup> *Supplement to the Code of Iowa, 1907*, Sec. 1056-a28; *Supplement to the Code of Iowa, 1913*, Sec. 1056-a26a.

<sup>39</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1909*, Ch. 46.

<sup>40</sup> *Laws of Iowa, 1913*, Ch. 68.

taking advantage of this act to increase the library income for maintenance purposes.<sup>41</sup>

The law relating to the number of library trustees was amended by the Thirty-sixth General Assembly and codified. The new law authorized a library board of five, seven, or nine, instead of nine as previously provided, the number to be fixed by an ordinance of the city council. The members were to be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council, and the term of office was made six years for all boards.<sup>42</sup>

One of the important library laws passed in Iowa was that providing for the extension of free public library privileges to residents outside the corporate limits of the city or town in which the library was located. This law first enacted by the Thirty-first General Assembly in 1906, gave library trustees power to contract with the trustees of the township or the board of supervisors of the county in which the library was situated, or of adjacent townships or counties, or with the governing body of any neighboring town or city not having library facilities for the public, to loan the books of the library either singly or in groups, upon such terms as might be agreed upon in the contract. The law gave boards of supervisors authority to contract with the trustees of any free public library for the use of the library by people residing outside the corporate limits of the town or city in which the library was located, upon the same terms and conditions as those granted to the residents of the city or town, to pay the library an amount agreed upon and to levy a tax not exceeding one mill on the dollar of valuation of the county outside the corporate limits of cities and towns in the county. Township trustees were allowed to contract for the use of public libraries, and on petition

<sup>41</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1913, Ch. 69.

<sup>42</sup> *Supplemental Supplement to the Code of Iowa*, 1915, Sec. 728.



of the majority of the resident taxpayers in the township could levy a maximum tax of one mill. City or town councils contracting for the use of a public library by the people in a city or town not having a free public library could levy a maximum tax of one mill to pay for the use of a library.<sup>43</sup>

An act passed in 1913 by the Thirty-fifth General Assembly amended the library extension law and broadened its scope, making it possible for any township, school corporation, adjacent city or town, or entire county, to become tributary to the city or town library. Provision was made for a maximum tax levy of one mill and for a contract on the part of any of these governmental units with the library. Such contracts were to be for a period of five years unless otherwise specified. Further provision was made that the making of such a contract with the library board and the levying of the tax should be mandatory on the part of the officers of the township, school corporation, city, or town, upon presentation of a petition signed by a majority of the resident taxpayers.<sup>44</sup>

In 1921 the Thirty-ninth General Assembly passed an act amending the library extension law and making provision that contracts entered into by the board of library trustees and any school corporation, civil township, county, city, or town should provide for the rate of tax to be levied during the period of the contract, and such contracts should remain in force until terminated by a majority vote of the electors of such school corporation, civil township, county, city or town. As finally amended by the Fortieth General Assembly such contract by a county superseded all contracts between library trustees and townships or school corporations outside cities and towns.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1906, Ch. 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1913, Ch. 70.

<sup>45</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1921, Ch. 234; *Code of 1924*, Sec. 5859.

## THE IOWA LIBRARY COMMISSION

A need was soon felt by the promoters of library work for a central bureau of library information, supervision, and encouragement of libraries. The Iowa Library Association, the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, the State Teachers Association, and other organizations did much to create a favorable sentiment toward securing legislation for a library commission. The club women of the State were especially interested and active in advancing the library cause. Through the library committee, which was established as one of the standing committees at the organization of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, active work was begun toward securing such legislation as would establish a library commission.<sup>46</sup>

At the seventh annual meeting of the Iowa Library Association, in 1896, the Honorable C. H. Gatch of Des Moines reported for the legislative committee that the appointment of a library commission had been presented in the preceding session of the legislature and had been favorably received, but the law had not been secured. At each subsequent meeting of the association this legislation was urged. That it was secured in 1900 was due largely to the efforts of Captain W. H. Johnston who served as president of the Iowa Library Association for four years, and Miss Ella M. McLoney who was secretary for eight years.<sup>47</sup>

The Iowa Library Commission was created by an act of the legislature approved on March 20, 1900. The Commission was to consist of seven members, the State Librarian, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the President of the State University, and four members to be appointed by the Governor, at least two of whom were to be

<sup>46</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 8; *The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), February 21, 1909.

<sup>47</sup> *Iowa Library Association* (1904), pp. 8, 9, 13. The Iowa Library Association was organized in 1890 as the Iowa Library Society.



women. The term of office was to be five years. Their duties were to give advice and counsel to all free libraries and to all public school libraries in the State and to all communities which proposed to establish libraries, as to the best means of administering them, the selection of books, cataloging, and other details of library management, and to send librarians to help organize new libraries or to suggest improvements in those already established. A biennial report was to be made to the Governor. The law provided that the Commission obtain reports from the free public libraries and public school libraries showing the condition, growth, development, and method of management, and furnish annually to the Secretary of State information for publication in the *Iowa Official Register*. The Library Commission was to employ a Secretary, not from its own members, who was to act under the Commission. No Commission member was to receive any salary, but expenses incurred in traveling for the library interests of the State were to be paid.<sup>48</sup>

The Commission organized in July, 1900, with Johnson Brigham, State Librarian, as President. Miss Alice S. Tyler, formerly head of the catalog department of the Cleveland Public Library, was employed as Secretary, but activities did not begin until October first of that year. The purpose of creating the Commission was to promote the establishment and efficiency of free public libraries and public school libraries in the State. Iowa was the third State to establish such a commission in the Middle West, having been preceded by Wisconsin and Minnesota.<sup>49</sup>

Among the members of the Library Commission who were appointed by the Governor were Mrs. Harriet C. Towner of Corning, Iowa, who served twenty-three contin-

<sup>48</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1900, Ch. 116.

<sup>49</sup> *Bulletin of the Iowa Library Commission*, Vol. I (1901), pp. 1, 2.

uous years on the Commission, resigning in 1923, because of the appointment of the Honorable Horace M. Towner to the governorship of Porto Rico and the removal of Mr. and Mrs. Towner to Porto Rico, and Captain W. H. Johnston of Fort Dodge, who remained a member until his death on June 6, 1911. Mr. Johnson Brigham was President of the Library Commission from its establishment until his death on October 8, 1936. Another worker who was identified with the library movement for many years was Mrs. Henry J. Howe of Marshalltown, who was a member of the Iowa Library Commission from 1904 until her death in 1926. She took a keen interest in library matters, and the work of the Library Commission profited much from her connection with it. Much of the success of the Commission and the advancement of the public libraries of the State are due to the efforts of these pioneers.<sup>50</sup>

The library law was amended by the Twenty-ninth General Assembly in 1902 and the Library Commission was required to give advice and counsel to all free and other public libraries and to communities proposing to establish them. The Commission was allowed to print such lists and circulars of information as it considered necessary and as were approved by the Executive Council, to conduct a summer school of library training, to establish a clearing house for periodicals for free gifts to local libraries, and to perform

<sup>50</sup> *Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. IX (1923), p. 165. Vol. X (1926), p. 68; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1910-1912, p. 28. The following persons have served on the Iowa Library Commission by appointment of the Governor: Harriet C. (Mrs. H. M.) Towner, Corning, 1900-1923; Jessie Banning Waite Davidson, Burlington, 1900-1904; Witter H. Johnston, Fort Dodge, 1900-1911; Elizabeth S. (Mrs. D. W.) Norris, Grinnell, 1900-1913; Anna B. (Mrs. H. J.) Howe, Marshalltown, 1900-1926; Flora E. S. (Mrs. A. J.) Barkley, later Mrs. Wm. D. Southwick, Boone, 1912-1927; W. R. Orchard, Council Bluffs, 1913-1933; Martha McClure, Mt. Pleasant, 1926-1929; A. M. Deyoe, Des Moines, 1926-1933; Mrs. John Fox Lake, Shenandoah, 1927-1932; Mary (Mrs. D. S.) Humeston, Albia, 1929-date; Mrs. H. H. Tedford, Mount Ayr, 1932-date; Mrs. J. C. Pryor, Burlington, 1935-date; Arthur E. Thompson, Sioux City, 1933-date.



other public services which might seem to be for the best interests of the libraries in Iowa.<sup>51</sup>

The library legislation of the Twenty-ninth General Assembly also included an act providing for the transfer of the Traveling Library from the State Library Board to the Iowa Library Commission. The annual appropriation for both the Traveling Library and the Commission was increased from \$4000 to \$6000. Prior to the passing of this act the Traveling Library had an annual appropriation of \$2000 and the Library Commission had the same. Of the \$6000 not more than \$3500 was to be used for salaries and expenses of the Commission and the Secretary. The number of assistants and their salary and the salary of the Secretary were to be fixed by the Committee on Retrenchment and Reform.<sup>52</sup>

In 1909 the Thirty-third General Assembly amended the law providing for an increase of the total appropriation for the work, making a total appropriation of \$11,000 annually for all the expenditures, including books for the Traveling Library. A limit of \$6000 was placed on salaries, which were to be fixed by the Legislative Committee on Retrenchment and Reform, upon recommendation of the Commission.<sup>53</sup> A readjustment in the appropriation increasing the salary fund to \$7600 was made by the Thirty-fifth General Assembly in 1913.<sup>54</sup> An amendment was enacted in 1915 by the Thirty-sixth General Assembly fixing the annual appropriation at \$15,000 of which \$9600 might be spent for salaries.<sup>55</sup> In 1921 the appropriation for activi-

<sup>51</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1902, Ch. 173. The Executive Council now includes the following State officials—Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer, and Secretary of Agriculture.

<sup>52</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1902, Ch. 173.

<sup>53</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1909, Ch. 190.

<sup>54</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1913, Ch. 259.

<sup>55</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1915, Ch. 206.

ties was placed at \$12,000, but a separate appropriation was made for salaries amounting to about \$14,000.<sup>56</sup> In 1925 and 1927, the budget carried \$14,100 annually for salaries and \$9250 per year for expenses.<sup>57</sup>

The State appropriation for the Commission in 1931 was \$24,020 annually — \$14,820 for salaries and \$9200 for miscellaneous expenses and books. The Secretary's salary was fixed at \$2400 a year.<sup>58</sup> In 1933 the total was dropped to \$18,568, of which \$2112 was specifically allotted to the Secretary's salary, the remainder being a lump sum.<sup>59</sup> Two years later the appropriation was raised slightly — to \$19,500.<sup>60</sup>

The activities of the Iowa Library Commission have developed as the demands of the work have required and as appropriations have permitted. The work includes supervision and extension, periodical exchange, collection of statistics, the work of publication, and the work of the traveling library system.<sup>61</sup> In 1900 its task was, in a general way, to advance the library interests of the State by encouraging the organization and development of free public libraries and raising the standards of libraries already in existence.<sup>62</sup> The Secretary gave encouragement, advice, and assistance to communities, by correspondence and by personal visits, in order to arouse interest for the establishment of a subscription library or the submission of a vote for a free public library. Every effort was made to encourage all cities in Iowa with a population of two thousand or

<sup>56</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1921, Chs. 235, 240(18).

<sup>57</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1925, Ch. 218(31), 1927, Ch. 275(28).

<sup>58</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1931, Ch. 257(28).

<sup>59</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1933, Ch. 188(28).

<sup>60</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, 1935, Ch. 126(25).

<sup>61</sup> Julia A. Robinson's *The Iowa Library Commission in the Texas Libraries*, Vol. I (July, 1916), p. 23.

<sup>62</sup> *Marshalltown Times-Republican*, February 4, 1909.



more to vote for a free public library. Assistance was given with regard to library building plans, furniture, equipment, book selection and the organization of the library according to modern methods. Addresses were given at teachers' meetings, women's clubs, and public meetings.

Soon after its organization, the Iowa Library Commission decided to give a six weeks' summer course in Library Training, the Regents of the State University having, through the University President, Dr. George E. MacLean, a member of the Library Commission, expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Commission in providing the instruction. Miss Tyler, Secretary of the Commission, who had had experience in library instruction in Ohio while on the staff of the Cleveland Public Library and had been trained at the Library School at Armour Institute was made Director of the School.<sup>63</sup>

The first session was held in 1901 as a regular department of the Summer Session of the State University. The school was intended for the librarians of smaller libraries, for assistants in larger libraries, and for those definitely appointed to library positions in the State, who wished to prepare for their work. Opportunity to enroll was given for those who felt their lack of knowledge of modern library methods and who did not have the time or means to attend a regular library school. Students were received from other States if they met the admission requirements and if the limit of students had not been reached by Iowa applicants. The first year there were twenty-two students and the second year thirty-nine.<sup>64</sup> The Library School has been most successful, and during the early years of its existence was attended by the librarians and members of the staff of

<sup>63</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 23, 24.

<sup>64</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 24, 29, 30.

the majority of the Iowa public libraries.<sup>65</sup> It was conducted under the joint auspices of the Commission and the University until 1912, when it was discontinued on account of the increased pressure of the work of the Commission. In 1913 it was again held, this time under the auspices of the State University and it has been conducted by the University with the coöperation of the Commission since then.<sup>66</sup>

The improvement in the training of librarians has been notable. In 1901 there were but three libraries in the State which employed trained library service. By 1909 there were twenty-four trained librarians in the State who had received training at one of the regular library schools giving extended courses, and almost one hundred librarians and assistants who had attended the Iowa Summer Library School. All over Iowa modern public libraries were being established in charge of trained and interested librarians, eager and active in extending the radius of the influence of their institutions and ready to help in every way to promote the interests of the community and the individual, and make the library an active factor in civic life.<sup>67</sup>

From the first the Iowa Library Commission has served as a medium for the exchange of periodicals, either single numbers or complete volumes.<sup>68</sup> The purpose of the periodical exchange has been to build up the reference material of the small libraries. Libraries which have duplicate magazines, or which collect magazines in their localities may send these to the Iowa Library Commission. From this collection the Commission supplies libraries with volumes or parts of volumes needed to complete sets. There is no

<sup>65</sup> Alice S. Tyler, Secretary, Iowa Library Commission. (Clipping in office of Secretary. Source not given.)

<sup>66</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1910-1912*, p. 24, 1912-1914, pp. 17-19.

<sup>67</sup> *The Register and Leader* (Des Moines), February 21, 1909, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 31.



cost to libraries except transportation on the periodicals obtained through the Commission. Only standard magazines are received, older numbers indexed in Poole's Index and later ones in the Reader's Guide, with a short supplementary list.

The most important publication issued by the Iowa Library Commission is the *Iowa Library Quarterly*. It is now sent to librarians of public, association, school, and college libraries and to board members of public libraries. The aim of the *Quarterly* is to give help through library news and articles on library matters.<sup>69</sup> The Library Commission has also issued many separate publications. Among these are pamphlets suggesting new methods and improvements in library work applicable to Iowa libraries. Special book lists have been issued on such subjects as Agriculture, Domestic Science, Shakespeare, and Art. Lists of books in the sets sent out by the Traveling Library have also been published.<sup>70</sup>

One of the most important publications for which the Commission has had responsibility, is the *Check List of the Publications of the State of Iowa*, authorized by the Executive Council and prepared under the supervision of the Secretary of the Library Commission. A *List of Books by Iowa Authors* was issued by the Commission in 1904.<sup>71</sup> Special reading lists have been provided for children in the grades and, in coöperation with the State Department of Public Instruction, a *Catalogue of Books for School Districts of Iowa* has been published.<sup>72</sup>

Blanks for the collection of library statistics for publication in the *Iowa Official Register* are furnished free to li-

<sup>69</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1926-1928, p. 11.

<sup>70</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1900-1903, pp. 18, 19.

<sup>71</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1903-1905, p. 8.

<sup>72</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1910-1912, p. 19.

braries from the Library Commission office, as are blanks for keeping daily and monthly statistics to be compiled in the annual report, blanks for use in making the annual budget, and those used in certifying the tax levy.<sup>73</sup>

In 1906, the Library Commission was also instrumental in securing a Supervising Librarian to organize and develop the libraries in the fourteen State institutions under the Board of Control of State Institutions. Miss Miriam E. Carey, Librarian at the Burlington Public Library for six years and trained at the University of Illinois Library School, was secured as Librarian. Iowa was the first State to undertake the systematic development of libraries in State institutions under a trained librarian. During this period the Library Commission gave considerable service through its periodical exchange, 1079 complete volumes and 2084 single numbers being sent out.<sup>74</sup>

The first office of the Library Commission was in the State Capitol in the Law Library. In 1903, on account of the growth in work of the Commission and the need of shelving, three small rooms in the basement of the State House were assigned to the Commission. When the State Historical Building was planned the need of the Library Commission for adequate quarters was considered and the ground floor of the east wing was assigned to this department and when the building was completed in 1906 the Library Commission moved into its present quarters, the plans for which had been made by Miss Tyler. The offices include a large room for the shelving of books of the general collection, also serving as an office for the staff, the Secretary's office, a shipping room, and a stack-room.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1926-1928*, p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1905-1906*, pp. 9, 10, 14.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Miss Julia A. Robinson, Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission, on January 4, 1929; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1903-1905*, p. 8, 1905-1906, p. 12.



Miss Alice S. Tyler, who began her duties as Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission on October 1, 1900, brought to the work wide training and experience, and took up her task with enthusiasm. Having been a club woman for years, she entered into the spirit of coöperation manifested by the Federation of Women's Clubs and steadfastly coördinated the work of the Commission, especially the Traveling Library work, with that of the library committee of the Federation. A large part of her time was spent in traveling about the State, giving assistance to libraries and planning for new libraries. The designation of Director of Library Extension was early added to that of Secretary.<sup>76</sup>

In June, 1913, Miss Tyler resigned her position as Secretary and Director of Library Extension, to become Director of the Library School of Western Reserve University at Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>77</sup> Her resignation took effect on September 1, 1913. When Miss Tyler entered upon her library service in Iowa there had been 41 free public libraries in the State and ninety centers to which Traveling Libraries were sent. At the time of her resignation there were 114 free public libraries and a large number of association libraries, and the number of Traveling Library stations was over 700. The number of library buildings had grown from five to eighty-four, the number of trained librarians had greatly increased, and library interests throughout the State had broadened.<sup>78</sup>

At the Commission meeting in July, 1913, Miss Julia A. Robinson, for eighteen months Supervising Librarian of State Institutions, a native of Iowa, and a graduate of the

<sup>76</sup> *Marshalltown Times-Republican*, December 5, 1904; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1908-1910, p. 14.

<sup>77</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1912-1914, p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> *Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. VII (1913), p. 28; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1912-1914, p. 7. The report of the Library Commission for 1900-1903 gives the number of libraries as forty-eight in 1900.

Wisconsin Library School, was selected as Miss Tyler's successor.<sup>79</sup> She entered upon the duties of the office on September 1, 1913, and is [1936] the present Secretary. Previous to her work as Librarian of the State Institutions in Iowa, Miss Robinson had served one year as Secretary of the Library Commission in North Dakota, and then because of her success as an organizer was employed by the new Library Commission of Kentucky to organize its work, while the elected secretaries of the respective States were given a year's leave to prepare for their work.<sup>80</sup> Miss Robinson has continued the general lines of work approved by the Commission, actively coöperating in all library movements in the State, giving aid in the organization of associations and in campaigns for a tax vote and in numerous matters involving the library interests of the State.

Twenty years after the creation of the Iowa Library Commission — in 1920 — the staff had grown considerably. It consisted of the Secretary and Director of Library Extension, an Organizer, a Cataloger, the Librarian of the Traveling Library, the Reference Librarian, a stenographic clerk, a stenographer, a record clerk, a general assistant or apprentice for the routine work of the office and two high school boys working half time each as shipping clerks. In 1936 the staff consisted of the Secretary, Librarian of the Traveling Library, Reference Librarian, Traveling Library Assistant, General Library Assistant, Record Clerk, two stenographers, and two shipping clerks.<sup>81</sup>

#### THE IOWA TRAVELING LIBRARY

One of the most important activities of the Iowa Library

<sup>79</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1912-1914*, pp. 7, 8.

<sup>80</sup> *Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. VII (1913), p. 37.

<sup>81</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1918-1922*, pp. 22, 23; letter from Julia A. Robinson, dated October 23, 1936.



Commission has been the Iowa Traveling Library. The story of this library activity began, however, before the Library Commission was organized. Judge Horace M. Towner was the originator of the idea in Iowa, but much credit is also due the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs for securing the passage of the bill establishing the Traveling Library. With the appointment of the library committee in the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs library extension began in earnest. The club women saw great educational possibilities in this movement and it was work which they could do and from which they could see quick results. At the first meeting of the Federation held in Marshalltown in December, 1895, the feasibility of presenting a bill, asking for a system of traveling libraries in the State at the next session of the General Assembly was discussed. The women did not find sufficient information to warrant them in drafting and presenting such a bill, but they were much pleased to be invited to help with the passage of the Traveling Library bill, drafted by Judge Towner of Corning and introduced in the legislature in 1896. Letters were sent to each club in the Federation asking its officers to write personal letters to Senators and Representatives from their districts asking for their support to the bill and also requesting that an article written by Judge Towner, on this subject, be published in their city papers. The prompt response to the call was what really secured the passage of the bill.<sup>82</sup>

By the act which was approved on April 8, 1896, the trustees of the State Library were empowered to establish associate libraries in connection with the school and college libraries throughout the State. The trustees and the State

<sup>82</sup> Letter to the writer from Alice S. Tyler, Dean of the School of Library Science, Western Reserve University, dated March 9, 1929; *Report of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs*, 1907, p. 114; *Proceedings of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs*, 1897, pp. 53, 54.

Librarian were to develop the details of a loaning system, including the loan of books. Such loans were made to associate libraries and, upon receipt of a petition signed by twenty-five taxpayers, to communities and organizations where no library existed. An appropriation of \$4000 was made for the purchase of books and equipment. These collections were to be designated as Iowa Traveling Libraries. In 1898 an annual appropriation of \$2000 was made for this purpose. In 1902, when the Iowa Library Commission was created, the Traveling Library was transferred from the State Library to the Commission.<sup>83</sup>

The books of the Traveling Library were divided into two groups — a general loan collection, from which books were selected to fill requests, and fixed sets of fifty books each. When the Traveling Library was transferred to the Library Commission a revision of the older libraries was begun and an author and subject catalog was prepared on cards for office use. As the collection of books increased and their use developed, it was found that many of the books in the fixed sets were better suited to the needs of the study clubs, and would, therefore, be of more service in the general loan collection. It was seen too that by adding new books to some of the older sets their usefulness would be increased. The work of revision was a slow process and was carried on gradually as the libraries came in from circulation over the State.<sup>84</sup>

The Traveling Library is under the direct supervision of the Secretary of the Library Commission. Very early it grew to such proportions and required the close attention of skilled help to such an extent that the responsibility was put in the hands of a special traveling librarian. Miss

<sup>83</sup> Brigham's *A Library in the Making* (1913), p. 57; *Laws of Iowa*, 1896, Ch. 49, 1898, Ch. 148, 1902, Ch. 173.

<sup>84</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 37.



Margaret W. Brown was the first person to serve in this capacity. She carefully worked out the charging system and the office and shipping records and the efficiency of the Traveling Library was due largely to her efforts. In 1912, Miss Brown resigned on account of ill health and Miss Reba Davis, a graduate of the Illinois Library School, was appointed to the position. During the eleven years of her service, she thoroughly organized and developed the Traveling Library, inaugurated the reference work with study clubs and aided debate work considerably. During this period books for the blind were added to the collection, hundreds of Traveling Library stations established and the Traveling Library of Iowa made an important factor in rural education and recreation.<sup>85</sup>

The Traveling Library places books within the reach of every citizen of the State however remote from a library. All material from the Traveling Library is loaned free, except for transportation charges. Schools, both rural and city, and organizations such as women's study clubs, missionary societies, farmers' clubs, debating teams, and kindred organizations make use of the books of the Traveling Library. Free public libraries having small collections and library associations borrow books from the Traveling Library. Books are also loaned to individuals. The largest number of books, both of fixed groups and from the general loan collection go to the schools — rural schools, consolidated schools, graded and high schools in towns without libraries, and also to high schools and colleges in towns having public libraries which are not able to supply needed debate material. Titles are often duplicated many times, but the supply of books is far short of the number needed.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Alice S. Tyler's *Library Extension Work by State Commissions* (clipping); *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 37.

<sup>86</sup> Tyler's *Books for a State in the Farmer's Wife*, Vol. XIV, (April, 1912), p. 341; Tyler's *Supplying Books to the People of Iowa in Wallaces' Farmer*,

The only supply of books in many small communities is the Traveling Library. The number of books is, however, inadequate for the needs. Many boys and girls in Iowa are wholly dependent for their reading upon the books sent to school and community libraries from the Traveling Library.

Many demands are made by farmers, both individually and through the farmers' clubs, for the latest and best books on various phases of agriculture. Books on home-making, domestic science, etc., are requested by farmers' wives. The Traveling Library is in close touch with the Agricultural Extension Department of the State College at Ames and has received its hearty support and coöperation. The Agricultural Extension Department is in turn supplied with books from the Traveling Library for use in exhibit cars and short courses. The selection of books for the Traveling Library on agricultural subjects is made upon the advice and judgment of experts in these lines.<sup>87</sup>

The open shelf or general collection is drawn upon to fill requests for material upon certain topics or lines of study, or for specific books. These may be loaned to individuals or to groups and the number of such requests received from individual borrowers is increasing. Many of the requests can not be filled when received, but reservations are made and the book is finally sent to the one who wishes it. Books in the general collection are loaned for two weeks.

Each of the fixed sets of fifty books contains history,

Vol. XXXVI (December 29, 1911), p. 1814; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission*, 1900-1903, p. 38, 1918-1920, p. 19, 1926-1928, p. 11; Stuart's *Iowa Owns Books — Iowans Use 'Em* in the *Iowa Magazine Section*, 1923, pp. 367, 376; Robinson's *Do You Want Books?* in *Midland Schools*, November, 1936.

<sup>87</sup> Tyler's *Supplying Books to the People of Iowa* in *Wallaces' Farmer*, Vol. XXXVI (December 29, 1911), p. 1814; Tyler's *Success of the Traveling Library in the Homestead*, Vol. LV (March 3, 1910), p. 519; W. H. Stacy's *How to Obtain Books* (Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts Extension Bulletin No. 180, January, 1932).



travel, biography, useful arts, fiction, some books for children, and miscellaneous literature, selected to meet the needs of the average community. These sets are loaned for periods of three months. The loaning of fixed groups is now less common since better service can be given by selecting a certain number of books from the general loan collection.<sup>88</sup>

The Traveling Library also contains picture collections. These include reproductions of famous paintings, historical pictures, and a collection of photographs of the beauty spots of Iowa. Pictures are loaned for exhibition and for study. In 1934 there were 171 picture collections available. Stereoscopic views are also loaned for school use, and for use by study clubs and "shut-ins".<sup>89</sup>

Books for the blind were circulated as early as 1903. This was made possible by the coöperation of the Superintendent of the Iowa College for the Blind. As the New York Point system was the one generally understood in Iowa, and taught at the Iowa College for the Blind at Vinton at that time, the Library Commission circulated books in New York Point. During the biennium 1922-1924 books in Revised Braille were added as the system of teaching at the Iowa College for the Blind was changed from the New York Point to the Revised Braille. The books are loaned free to blind readers of Iowa. In 1934 there were some 1300 books for the blind in the Traveling Library.<sup>90</sup>

One feature of the Traveling Library work is the exhibit held at the State Fair each year by means of which the

<sup>88</sup> Tyler's *Library Extension Work by State Commissions* (clipping); *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1926-1928*, p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1906-1908*, p. 16, 1908-1909, p. 19.

<sup>90</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, pp. 40, 41, 1903-1905, p. 13, 1932-1934, p. 17; interview with Julia A. Robinson on January 4, 1929.

books are made known to the farmers and others attending the Fair.

In summer, when schools are not in session, books are loaned to Young Women's Christian Associations, Young Men's Christian Associations, Campfire Girls' camps, and other organizations, thus keeping the books in use.

In 1903 the Commission reported 175 centers receiving Traveling Library books. During the first year the Traveling Library operated under the Library Commission, 227 libraries were sent out, the number of readers being 6,693 and the circulation 19,032 volumes, though reports were not received from all the libraries sent out. The number of volumes in the Traveling Library was 11,600. The second biennial report for the years 1903-1905 gave the circulation of Traveling Library books as 58,118 volumes. In 1912 there were 22,823 books on hand and a circulation of 30,211 volumes. The number of volumes in the Traveling Library, in July, 1916, had increased to 32,367, of which 13,900 volumes were in fixed groups. In 1933, thirty years after the founding of the Library Commission, there were 68,662 books in the Traveling Library, and 224,296 books were loaned to schools, clubs, and individuals during the preceding biennium. In November, 1936, the number of books was listed at 69,949 and the circulation for the biennium was 228,698.<sup>91</sup>

#### ADVANCE OF PUBLIC LIBRARY WORK IN IOWA

An account has been given in the preceding chapters of some of the earliest association or subscription libraries formed in the State of Iowa, the advancement of the public library movement through legislation, and progress made under the guidance of the Library Commission. An attempt

<sup>91</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 38, 1903-1905, p. 10, 1914-1916, p. 16, 1932-1934, p. 17; data furnished by Julia A. Robinson, Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission, dated November 6, 1936.



will be made here to review the causes or agencies which have influenced public library development and to summarize general library progress and conditions in the State.

Women's clubs and organizations have been one of the most influential factors in the establishment and development of libraries. A Women's Club, the Young Men's Christian Association, or a church society was often the means of starting the library movement in a town or city. In some towns various clubs federated for this purpose.<sup>92</sup> The first standing committee appointed by the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs was the Library Committee whose work has been closely identified with that of the Iowa Library Association. This Committee was largely influential in securing the system of traveling libraries in 1896. A few years later the aid of the Federation was a potent factor in securing the creation of the State Library Commission. The general interest in public libraries and the growth made throughout Iowa undoubtedly have been due largely to the Women's Clubs. Many of the library buildings are the results of the efforts of the Federation; members of the Women's Clubs fostered the small subscription library and then secured a tax to make it a free public library that it might be more broadly useful.<sup>93</sup>

Another agency which has worked for the improvement of library facilities is the Iowa Library Association, which was organized in 1890 as the Iowa Library Society for the purpose of promoting the library interests of the State. This organization was largely due to the efforts of Mrs. Ada North, then librarian of the State University Library at Iowa City. Iowa was the second State in the union to

<sup>92</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 10.

<sup>93</sup> Mrs. T. J. Fletcher's *Relation of the Library to Study Clubs* in the *Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. III (1903), p. 63; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 10.

form an organization of the kind, New York being the first.<sup>94</sup>

In 1894 the annual meeting of the Iowa Library Society was held in connection with the State Teachers Association. The Library Society was made a section of the Association and was designated as the Iowa Library Section. The library group, however, withdrew from the Teachers Association in 1896 and organized as the Iowa Library Association. The object of the Association, as stated in the articles of incorporation, was to encourage the establishment of public libraries throughout the State, to disseminate information concerning proper methods of conducting them, and to encourage in cities and towns public opinion favorable to the general support of public libraries.<sup>95</sup>

At each of its meetings the Association urged the appointment of a library commission and the creation of the Iowa Library Commission in 1900 was largely effected by leaders in the Iowa Library Association. In coöperation with the Iowa Library Commission the Iowa Library Association now holds eight district meetings throughout the State in the spring.

Library progress in Iowa has also been considerably influenced by Mr. Carnegie's gifts for library buildings. For many years Iowa has been one of the leading States in the number of Carnegie library buildings erected.<sup>96</sup> In the report for 1900-1903 the Iowa Library Commission made the following statement:

"The liberality of Mr. Andrew Carnegie in erecting library buildings, both in this country and abroad, has undoubtedly given an impetus to the library movement that it might not otherwise

<sup>94</sup> *Iowa Library Association* (1904), p. 8; *Library Journal*, Vol. XVII (September, 1892), p. 287.

<sup>95</sup> *Iowa Library Association* (1904), pp. 10, 11, 12.

<sup>96</sup> T. W. Koch's *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (1917), p. 166; *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 8.



have had. While the public library would without doubt have grown in strength because of its recognized service to the community in the higher development of the people, nevertheless the proffer of a building for housing the library serves as an incentive in many communities to establish a library."<sup>97</sup>

The first Carnegie library building erected in Iowa was at Fairfield in 1893. In 1903 there were forty-four public library buildings and three college library buildings in Iowa erected with Carnegie money. In 1913 there were eighty-three Carnegie libraries in Iowa and in 1934 the State had one hundred public library buildings erected with Carnegie gifts, representing a total cost of \$1,900,000. The smallest Carnegie library building in the State was erected at Laurens (with a population of 864) in 1910 at a cost of \$3800. The smallest town in Iowa containing a Carnegie library is Alden, a town having a population of 759 in 1928. This library building was erected in 1913 at a cost of \$9000. The largest Carnegie gifts for library buildings were received by Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Dubuque, and Sioux City.<sup>98</sup>

In 1928 Iowa had only twenty-two library buildings not Carnegie gifts. The public library of Des Moines, the largest in the State, and the public library of Forest City, a small library of 4891 volumes opened in 1928, are the only public libraries in the State having buildings entirely paid for by taxation.<sup>99</sup>

Another factor affecting library development in Iowa that can not be overlooked is the changing rural conditions. In the early days the city and country were far separated and

<sup>97</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 14.

<sup>98</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 14, 1926-1928, pp. 22, 24, 1932-1934, pp. 21-25; *The Des Moines Register*, December 9, 1917.

<sup>99</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1926-1928*, pp. 18-21; *The Des Moines Register*, December 9, 1917.

there was little in common between them. The hard life of the pioneers, bad roads, and the wide reach of distance made many things hard to obtain. Modern conditions have united the heretofore far separated urban and rural classes. Now the rural districts work in coöperation with the city. Society is demanding a broader culture, even in the smaller communities. The township extension law passed in 1906 made it possible for public libraries to extend the free use of books to those residing in the country adjacent to a town or city having a free public library. In 1908 six libraries reported having secured the coöperation of one or more townships. Interest and enthusiasm was aroused in the townships where work had been inaugurated.<sup>100</sup>

The farmers, through the farmers' clubs and as individuals, demand the best books on agriculture. They become acquainted with the Traveling Library books through the Agricultural Extension Department of the State College at Ames. "Farm women are almost universally readers." Books on home-making and similar subjects are furnished by the Traveling Library.<sup>101</sup>

In 1916 twenty-four libraries were giving extension service, one library serving six townships, another serving four townships, two towns, and a school corporation. In 1936 twenty public libraries were giving extension service to from one-half a township to eight townships. In addition, Hardin and Page counties were giving county library service. Three tax-supported libraries — Alden, Eldora, and Iowa Falls — furnish books to the rural schools of Hardin

<sup>100</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1906-1908*, p. 9, 1908-1910, p. 9.

<sup>101</sup> L. L. Dickerson's *The Library and Changing Iowa* in the *Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. VII (1915), p. 183; Tyler's *Supplying Books to the People of Iowa* in *Wallaces' Farmer*, December 29, 1911, p. 14; L. I. Reed's *The Public Library and the Rural School* in the *Iowa Library Quarterly*, Vol. VII (1913), p. 54; W. R. Eastman's *Rural Extension* in the *Library Journal*, Vol. XXIX (January, 1914).



County and two public libraries — Clarinda and Shenandoah — perform the same service in Page County. In Hardin County the libraries supply only the rural schools.<sup>102</sup>

In the summer of 1926 the Iowa Library Association purchased the Iowa Book Car which was used to extend library service. The expenses for gasoline and repairs were met by the library using the car. It was much used the first year, but has been less used since, though it served a good purpose by calling attention to the possibility of county library service.<sup>103</sup>

During the period 1916–1918 library work of all kinds was affected by war conditions and in 1918 the influenza epidemic handicapped the work. In 1919 and 1936 a coal shortage closed some libraries. The number of communities making library beginnings by voting for the establishment of a public library was small, only five voting for tax support. To provide, advertise, and display books and pamphlets on all phases of the war was the first and constant effort made by all libraries. The Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission acted as Library Director of publicity for food conservation in Iowa. Two campaigns for the collection of books for camps were carried on. In the first Iowa gave 24,000 and in the second over 100,000 books. The Secretary of the Library Commission acted as State Director in both campaigns. Many of the books collected for the camp libraries went to the Commission office, where they were sorted, and bookplates, cards, and pockets were placed in the books, which were then packed and shipped to the camps designated by the War Service Committee of the American Library Association. Sixteen Iowa

<sup>102</sup> Data furnished by Julia A. Robinson, Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission, November 6, 1936.

<sup>103</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1924–1926*, pp. 6, 8, 1926–1928, p. 9.

librarians gave more or less time to work in camp or hospital libraries or at headquarters in Washington.<sup>104</sup>

The number of public libraries and the number of books available to library patrons has steadily increased. In 1892 there were fifteen free public libraries in Iowa, supported by taxation. In 1900 there were forty-eight; in 1920 there were one hundred and forty; in 1934 there were one hundred and seventy-eight; and in 1936 there were 196 public libraries. In 1900 there were, in addition, some forty-eight association or subscription libraries. These appear to remain as a borderline attempt to furnish books in communities without a library, for in 1920 fifty such libraries were reported and in 1936 one hundred and twenty.<sup>105</sup>

The Commission report for 1924-1926, gave the total number of volumes in tax-supported libraries as 1,764,356 and the total circulation as 7,101,334. The population of the State having access to tax supported libraries was 912,054 and to association libraries was 93,281, making a total of 1,005,335 out of a total population of 2,419,927.<sup>106</sup> The year ending March 31, 1934, showed a circulation of 11,384,612. In 1936 the number of volumes in Iowa public libraries was 2,386,674 and the number of books loaned for the preceding year was 9,889,829. The number of Iowa residents having access to public libraries in 1936 was 1,206,647.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Association, 1916-1918*, pp. 5, 8, 9, 10.

<sup>105</sup> Julia A. Robinson's *Iowa Library Facilities in Iowa Industrial Survey* (1932); *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1900-1903*, p. 13, 1918-1920, pp. 6, 8, 11, 1932-1934, pp. 6, 7; *Iowa Official Register, 1901*, pp. 162-167; data furnished by Julia A. Robinson, Secretary of the Iowa Library Association, dated November 6, 1936.

<sup>106</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1924-1926*, p. 23.

<sup>107</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1932-1934*, pp. 8, 21-25; data furnished by Julia A. Robinson, Secretary of the Iowa Library Commission, dated November 6, 1936.



That people in the smaller towns read more than those in larger places is, perhaps, only to be expected. In 1928 the per capita circulation of the West Branch Public Library was thirty-two, the highest in the State. The number of volumes in the library at that time was 4175 and the total number of borrowers was 844. Of these 256 were from the country. At the same time the Davenport Public Library led the larger public libraries in circulation with a per capita loan of a little over ten books.<sup>108</sup>

As public libraries have been established in cities and towns, Iowa's urban population is now largely library served, but a large part of the rural population is not yet provided for. In 1900, 85 per cent of the people of Iowa were without the benefits of free public libraries. By 1936 this percentage had dropped to 52 and many of these people were served by the Iowa Traveling Library.<sup>109</sup>

In 1914 there were fourteen counties and fifteen county seats without a free public library. Seven cities with a population over 2000 and about fifty towns with populations ranging from 1000 to 2000 were, at that time, without public libraries, though some of these had association libraries. Twenty years later there were still four cities having a population over 2500 without public libraries but two of these — Valley Junction and Bettendorf — were near large city libraries. According to the report for 1932-1934, there was at least one free public library in each Iowa county except Van Buren and some counties had more than one. Thirty-five counties had two free public libraries, twelve counties had three such libraries, six counties had four libraries, and one — O'Brien County — had five public libraries. Many of the forty-four counties with only one public

<sup>108</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1926-1928*, pp. 18-25.

<sup>109</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1932-1934*, p. 13; *Ought Iowa to Have a Library Commission* (1900).

library are those with the larger libraries such as Polk, Woodbury, Dubuque, and Scott counties.<sup>110</sup>

The general advance in library work in Iowa has, of course, been affected by the depression. The demand for a reduction of expenditures made itself felt in the appropriations by the General Assembly for the Iowa Library Commission and in the municipal levies for local libraries. The Beatty-Bennett Bill requiring a cut of five per cent in the tax levies naturally caused decreases in library appropriations in many places, although the cut was not legally required to include libraries. The reduction in property values and unpaid taxes also reduced the income of tax-supported libraries, while bank failures tied up money already in the hands of the library trustees. Librarians' salaries, already extremely low in comparison with the qualifications required, were cut from five to twenty-five per cent. The personnel of many libraries was reduced, although there was an increase of almost two million in the book circulation of the public libraries. The total income from taxes between 1932 and 1934 showed a decrease of \$72,903, and money tied up in closed banks almost equalled the drop in income so that salaries were almost \$70,000 less and the amount used to purchase books in the year ending in March, 1934, was nearly \$65,000 less than in 1932. At the same time libraries profited slightly from CWA, CWS, PWA, and NYA assistance. During the winter of 1933-1934 some fifty libraries were cleaned by CWA workers and about thirty were painted. Such assistants in regular library work were less satisfactory although "the sums paid for the workers without experience or preparation was often in excess of that being paid to regular librarians and assistants."<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1912-1914*, p. 8, 1932-1934, pp. 6, 19, 20.

<sup>111</sup> *Biennial Report of the Iowa Library Commission, 1930-1932*, p. 7, 1932-1934, pp. 5, 7, 8.



This is, however, only a passing phase of library work. It seems to be a generally accepted principle that libraries are entitled to public support and are necessary and desirable if an intelligent body of citizens is to be maintained.

LETHA PEARL MCGUIRE

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES  
LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA