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Winter Haven Public Library

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Florida Library History Project

Winter Haven Public Library

Report of Library Committee for Year 1925 - 1926

The Library Committee feel that the past year has been in many ways the most important of its existence. At the close of the year in April 1925, after the sale of our lot on Central Avenue, the building was on its way to its new location, where it now stands enlarged and improved in every way, and at last well equipped for a library of its size, and in the hands of a competent librarian, and all this in one short year.

At the time of the last meeting of the League in 1925 the building had been moved, and the committee was working out plans to remodel and put it into better shape both as to the library part and as to the upstairs apartment. The city had made what we felt to be a good offer, by deeding us the lot on East Central Avenue, upon condition that we should remodel the building, and put a mortgage upon it to cover expense of moving and rebuilding, with the agreement that the Civic League should own the property until the time should come when the city could give us a new library home in some suitable place.

When that time should come, the agreement with the city was, that we should deed the property back to the city, and they would then repay the amount extended in moving and remodeling and survey work. Before leaving for the summer, your chairman made an appeal to the city commissioners through Mayor McCutchen for a more substantial recognition of the library as an important contribution to the city by putting us on their regular budget, and by making us a regular appropriation, if possible putting us on a certain annual millage, such as is allowed by the laws of the State for libraries. The Mayor agreed to recommend that we be given what would be about 2 mills which would amount to \$3,000 annual appropriation.

Your committee felt that it was impossible to go ahead and meet the growing demands of the community and do any real library work upon the income we were getting. During the summer your chairman kept up a correspondence with Mayor

McCutcheon, urging thru him its claims of the library, and in the early fall we were all delighted to receive the information that beginning with January, 1926 the City Commission had voted to appropriate \$3,000 - \$250 a month to the library. This was felt to be the turning point in our history, and your committee at once began to look about for a good trained librarian to put in charge of the work.

When we finally succeeded in engaging a suitable person, the question of living quarters became acute. At that time in November, everything was crowded and prices for rooms was very high. Then too, the library was crowded, and no suitable place for children who flocked there and fairly stampeded the place after school hours. Your chairman offered to make a loan of an amount sufficient to build an addition for a living apartment for the librarian, and for children's room and in between a good work room for cataloguing, repairing, etc. Also for furnishing and equipping the librarian's apartment.

It was agreed that the amount loaned should not be more than enough so that the interest would be covered by the rental paid by the librarian. This amount so loaned was \$5,250 and the interest upon this at 8% amounts to \$35.00 a month, which is the amount paid by the librarian for the rent of the apartment. Out of the amount the additions were built and furnished. The children's room was provided with shelves. All the shelving of the library was repaired and put into good shape. A good work room in between library proper, and children's room was made and fitted with shelves and cupboards. The librarian's apartment was equipped with good and tasteful furnishings - completely furnished and fitted with electricity for cooking and for hot water supply.

We felt that the money had been well invested and that it had been made to reach as far as possible. Your chairman then went again to the Commissioners through Mayor McCutcheon, appealing to him to agree to add to the city agreement a promise to pay some part, at least, of the amount of money extended in making this much-needed addition to the library - with the results that the commissioners agreed that whenever they took over the property as before agreed, they would also repay to the Woman's Civic League \$3,000 toward the amount loaned for this addition, which would then be repaid to your chairman.

Your committee felt that, as the library was in need of so many things to put it into shape for successful library work - suitable desks, more equipment for cataloguing, a good file for all papers and correspondence, magazine rack for

reading room, more library tables and chairs etc. that it would be desirable to put in this new equipment. Paying for it gradually and for a time cutting down a little on our purchases of new books, so that we have added what puts us into shape as a very well equipped small town library and feel that when once we pay up for this investment we shall be in shape to run without additional expense for equipment. We pay our librarian \$150 a month, out of which she pays \$35.00 for the rent of her apartment. We have an assistant whom we pay about \$50.00 a month. Other expenses are lights, water, and care of grounds. Our income is as follows:

- From the City \$250.00 a month
- Interest on Endowment fund \$ 33.33 a month
- From rent of apartment \$ 45.00 a month

Some additional funds are secured by fines and fees. The use of the library for juvenile books and for prescribed school reading, for reference and reading room is made free to all children of the public schools. We still make a nominal membership charge of \$1.00 to the adult members, and we keep up our pay shelf for new fictions.

Last summer, at a time when the endowment fund given to this library by the will of Mrs. Florence E. Inman was to be reinvested. It was felt that as the amount \$5,000.00 - was just about what the League was carrying to cover the expense of moving and equipping the library (the amount which will eventually be repaid by the city) that it might be mutually advantageous to the League and to the Library to pay this endowment fund of \$5,000 directly to the League, and so make this League responsible for the interest to the library. The interest could be paid monthly which was to the advantage of both. This arrangement was made, and the League now carries this endowment fund as a loan and pays upon it monthly 8% interest (\$33.33) a month to the library. This \$5,000 will be repaid by the city at some indefinite time in the future. In the meantime if the League wishes, it could gradually reduce this debt and so re-invest the money, which might prove to be good business.

The library is now in a flourishing condition. It is in good hands - is well equipped, and expects to prove itself each year a greater and more useful asset to the citizens of Winter Haven and especially to the children.

- From July 1925 to April 1926

- The Circulation was 16,300
- Purchase of new books 200
- Donations of books 100

(This is a rough draft) On Library Report 1925 - 1926. Copied by Jewel Ulery, President, March 1, 1986.

WINTER HAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY HISTORY

The Woman's Club of Winter Haven would like a plaque placed just inside the entry way to the Library to read as follows:

Winter Haven Public Library. Founded in 1915. Woman's Civic League, Now Woman's Club of Winter Haven.

We are proud to have had so great a role in the life of Winter Haven Public Library. From records on file at our Clubhouse, in our lock box, and information in Mrs. Burr's book "History of Winter Haven" we submit these facts:

Woman's Civic League was organized in 1913 at the old Bonita Theater with Dr. Mary B. Jewett serving as first President. Prior to that time, the only library Winter Haven had was a few books on shelves in Dr. Woods Drug Store on Central Avenue.

*(p-86) A committee was appointed by the newly formed League to find out how to procure a Carnegie Library. League members conducted food sales and sold second hand articles, realizing a profit of \$220 toward a fund for the Library.

By 1915 the Library became the responsibility of the League.

*(p-87) It was announced that the new Library will be situated on the second floor of the new Englesen-Linger building which Bill Craig built on the present site of the Red Cross rooms.

The Civic League announces it will take at least 300 members to swing the deal and they list a lot of donations and one month's rent given by the owners of the building.

*(p-106) Mrs. Florence Inman, a member of the League, gave \$1,444 for books for the Library.

*(p-372) Dr. Jewett, with the help of League members, spent hours in plans and execution of money making ideas in order to finance the city Library. League members operated the library until the volume of works was so heavy that the city took complete charge. Other locations had been used for the Library.

Dr. Jewett passed away in 1952. The Civic League was instructed in her will to use \$15,000 toward the erection of a library building in Winter Haven, and any amount in excess of \$15,000 to be placed in an endowment fund to be used in acquiring needed books and literature for said Library.

The following year the city purchased a lot on Central Avenue on which to erect a library. The Woman's Club (re-named in 1944) sponsored a bridge party to raise money for the Library and realized a profit of \$150. Other card parties followed as fund raisers.

The Woman's Club delivered to the Exchange Bank \$6,200 in U.S. Treasury Bonds in 1952 to be placed in an endowment fund, the interest of which was to go to the Library.

Gertrude Watkins- Chairman of Budget & Finance, 1986

* History of Winter Haven, by Josephine Burr

WINTER HAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY HISTORY

March 24, 1926

Paid in full with all interest
March 6, 1946.

Trustee Jewett Estate

The Woman's Civic League hereby agrees to pay Dr. Mary Jewett the sum of Five

Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty (\$5,250) with interest at 8%, payable monthly. This amount being the sum paid by Dr. Jewett for building an addition to the Library Building for a children's room, a Library Work Room, and a Librarian's Apartment and for equipping and furnishing the same, also for putting the old furniture and bookshelves into good repair by painting etc.

It is further hereby agreed that whenever the City Commissioners are ready to house the Library in a better building, the three thousand dollars (\$3,000) which they have agreed to pay to the Civic League for this addition to the building be applied on the debt to Dr. Jewett.

Edna M. Scofield, President
Margaret M. DeHaven, Secy.
Tillie B. Poole, Treasurer

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WINTER HAVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY HISTORY

Memorandum Concerning the Endowment Fund of the Library Given as a legacy by Mrs. Florence E. Inman

In the winter of 1925 the Commissioners of Winter Haven agreed to deed to the Woman's Civic League a lot on the east side of Central Avenue as a site for the library building. The agreement made was that the League should pay for the expense of moving and remodeling the building and putting it into good shape for library use on the first floor and for an apartment upstairs; that the League should carry this debt by paying interest on it or should pay it off, and that when the city was ready to house the library in a permanent home, they would pay back to the League the money expended in moving and remodeling the building and the League would then deed back to the city the property thus acquired.

When the time came in the summer of 1925 for a change of investment of the Library Endowment Fund of \$5,000 given as a legacy by Mrs. Florence Inman, it was felt that it might be an advantageous arrangement both for the League and for the library to use this Endowment Fund to pay this debt incurred for the library

and pay the 8% interest upon it to the library. If this fund were invested in suitable trust fund securities it could not draw more than 5 or 6%, where as the League would pay 8%, and moreover the League would pay it monthly, which was a better arrangement for the Library.

The Chairman of the Library Committee, Dr. Mary B. Jewett, who had charge of this fund, agreed to turn it over to the League with the understanding that the League was to be held responsible for this trust fund, and to pay interest upon it until the City Commissioners decided to fulfill its agreement of paying for the debt incurred by the League in moving the Library, or until the League itself should decide to repay the Endowment Fund out of its resources and invest it in some suitable trust fund security.

Edna Scofield, President
Margaret M. DeHaven, Secy.
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