

January 1998

## Winter Park Public Library

Susana S. Parnell

Yvonne C.T. Vassel

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/fl\\_library\\_history](https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/fl_library_history)

---

### Recommended Citation

Parnell, Susana S. and Vassel, Yvonne C.T., "Winter Park Public Library" (1998). *Florida Library History Project*. 20.

[https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/fl\\_library\\_history/20](https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/fl_library_history/20)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Floridiana - General at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Library History Project by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usf.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usf.edu).

# Florida Library History Project

## Winter Park Public Library

*From  
Miss Lamson's Porch*

## A History of the

Winter Park Public Library

By  
Susana S. Parnell  
and  
Yvonne C. T. Vassel

Researched by: Susana S. Parnell  
Edited by: Yvonne C.T. Vassel

**Note:** *All images were scanned from photocopies.*

### BEGINNINGS

Hooker, Lamson, Cady, McClure, Guild, Ladd, Clark, Cook and Brown - nine names on which the life of Winter Park's first circulating library was built. Well-educated, capable, energetic and affluent, these women of the new township came together on the morning of December 9, 1885, to affix the stamp of organization to the Winter Park Circulating Library Association.

Books had been circulating in an organized reading circle for some time and, perhaps almost as long, there had been talk of creating a library for the community.

The village of Winter Park was less than five years old. It was in July 1881 that Loring Chase and Oliver Chapman obtained a deed to 600 acres of high land

between Lakes Maitland and Virginia, Osceola and Killarney. The town was platted with a boulevard running east from the South Florida Railroad depot to the shore of Lake Osceola.

The first buildings of the newly created township were completed by 1882 but there had been residents in the area before Chase and Chapman began their development project. The community of Osceola, located approximately where Mizell and Phelps Avenues intersect today, was home to the Mizells who had come to the area in 1857.

Charles and Eleanora Comstock had been winter visitors since 1877 and Mary Brown and Mary McClure - two of the library's founders - arrived in 1878. The two Marys built their home on the southwest shore of Lake Sylvan and named it "No Man's Land."

When the railroad finally came through the area it was located more than a mile to the west of the fledgling Osceola community. With its attraction as a business district stymied, Osceola became a part of Winter Park in 1884 and the Winter Park population soared to 500 by 1885.

Winter Park's image as a desirable place to live, already enhanced by the advent of the railroad, received another boost when it was chosen by the Congregational Church's national board as the site for a college. Classes at Rollins College began in the fall of 1885. At the time, construction on the elegant, four-story Seminole Hotel was nearing completion.

Yet, the physical appearance of Winter Park, as we know it, was still a long way away.

There was little of the oak canopy seen today. Instead, the prevalent trees were cypress and pine with palmetto and oak scrub. The streets were little more than wide, sandy tracks and the low bushes planted in precise rows were young citrus trees. The houses were wood-frame, mostly two-story with steeply pitched roofs, deep porches and tall windows designed to catch the slightest breeze.

On this particularly cold December day, the group of women intent on creating a lending library held a meeting at the



Parsonage, located on the current Rollins College Campus roughly where the Bush Science Center sits today.



This was a time of male-only suffrage and women had to content themselves with more "ladylike" pursuits such as ministering to the needy and coming up with ideas for civic projects. It was a time for noble purpose and new beginnings. The war, which had so bitterly divided the country twenty years before, was beginning to fade in memory and a mood of reconciliation was strong.

The record of that day's meeting, held close to the corner fireplace in the parlor, was brief. It names only the people elected to be officers of the circulating library:

President	Mrs. E. P. Hooker
Secretary & Treasurer	Miss E. Lamson
Librarian	Mrs. W. O. Cady
Solicitors	Misses McClure & Guild
Executive Committee	Mrs. Ladd, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Cook, Miss Brown

## **WHAT IS KNOWN OF THE FOUNDERS**

Elizabeth Hooker, 41, was the wife of Dr. Hooker, a Congregational minister and president of Rolling College. The daughter of a missionary, she had six children. She was raised by an uncle, a professor at Middlebury College, and so received some advanced education and was likely familiar with the workings of a college library.

Mary McClure, 63, and Mary E. Brown, 62, had both retired from teaching at Northwestern University. McClure, an artist, was said to be rather introverted. On the other hand, Mary Brown was remembered after her death at 87 in 1909 as being "of a singularly acute and independent mind, a lover of the best books, a keen critic. and an unfailing source of intellectual stimulus to all who knew her." Like Mrs. Hooker, Brown was the daughter of missionaries; her father had been an Episcopal priest who served on the Florida east coast in the 1870's.

Little is known of Mrs. C. J. Ladd except that the Winter Park Column of May 17, 1885 reported the arrival of Mr. Ladd of Everett, Mass. And, in October,

reported that his store - one half a drugstore and the other a hardware store - occupied the entire ground floor of the New Hampshire block.

There were two Misses Guild who came from Boston with their father Dr. William A. Guild in December 1883. Sr. Guild later purchased property on the north shore of Lake Osceola and built "Weatogue" as a residence and boarding house. Alice Guild was probably the one elected as a fund raiser for the library. She was about 25 years old, a graduate of the Boston Art School. Her sister Clara was a member of the first class at Rollins and later received the college's first degree conferred upon a woman.

Mrs. Clark was described in one newspaper article as "a wealthy lady from Minneapolis." She was the mother-in-law of Frederick Lyman, the first chairman of the Rollins College Board of Trustees.

Mrs. W.O. Cady and Mrs. Cook were from Bloomington, Illinois. Apart from the fact Mr. Cady was the clerk for Robert White in his Park Avenue store, little is known about either woman. In 1887 the local newspaper reported that the Cadys had returned to their old home in Illinois and mentioned that Mrs. Cady was a librarian for the Winter Park circulating library. However, after that year, the names of both Mrs. Cady and Mrs. Cook disappeared from mention in surviving records and it's believed they did not return to live in Winter Park.

Evaline Lamson, 30, lived with her mother and assisted with managing the boarding/rooming house the family ran. She had come to Winter Park that year with her mother, brother Arthur and possibly a second brother. She was to become a driving force behind the library's survival and for several years served simultaneously as librarian for the town library and the one at Rollins College.

## **THE BIRTHING PROCESS**

Having decided to create a town library, the most crucial decision for the women was not how to get the necessary books, after all they had been circulating books among themselves for some time, but where to base their new venture.

The porch and hall of the Lamson house were offered as the site, along with the services of Arthur Lamson to build a set of bookshelves.

The library operated Wednesdays and Saturdays from January to May. Records for the year 1887 give some insight into what was being read that year.

The new library had on its shelves such titles as the Scarlet Letter, The Last Days of Pompeii, Jane Eyre, Ivanhoe, and The Rise of Silas Lapham. There were also biographies such as Frederick the Great and religious titles such as Grace and Truth, The Blood of Jesus, Thoughts On Personal Religion, and Scientific Theism. Some titles indicate that the craving for purple prose is nothing new. More than one hundred years ago satisfaction was found in books with direct titles such as: Janet's Repentance, The Disowned, Sister's Secret, Living or Dead, and A Bachelor's Plunder.

The rules then were simple and also in keeping with the fact the library did not have a large inventory. Members could take out one book on Wednesday and Saturday and keep it for two weeks, with a one-week renewal. There was a 10 cent fine for non-renewal. Those who were not library members could take out books if they paid a \$1 deposit plus 10 cents for each week.

One year after the library's founding, as recorded in the minutes of the annual meeting held on December 16, 1886, its officers accepted an offer to move its operations from Miss Lamson's porch to a room in the building occupied by the Winter Park Company on the southwest corner of New England and Park Avenues.

In 1888 the Circulating Library Association got around to writing a constitution. Among its provisions was one that said any person could become a member by paying \$1 per year. It also defined the office of Solicitor an apt title for the person whose duty it was to solicit subscriptions and funds for the library.

The idea must have been popular. There were three meetings for discussion and proposals, attended by as many as fifteen persons, and all articles were accepted. A petition was submitted to the trustees of Francis Knowles' estate asking for land on which to erect a library building.

During his lifetime Knowles had been a major benefactor to the town. But, when the annual meeting convened on December 6, 1894 it was to receive the news that the petition had been denied. The proposed merger was dropped and no

further mention is found in records from that period. What was at first viewed as a setback, in fact freed both institutions to develop individually.

## **THE GREAT FREEZE**

In 1894 the economy of Winter Park depended on two things - citrus and the winter visitors. Both required mild temperatures to prosper. According to *The History of Orlando* by Eve Bacon, the temperature dropped to 24 degrees the Sunday after Christmas Day 1894. Soon afterward warm weather returned and citrus growers took comfort in the thought that the fruit might be lost but the trees had survived.



The warm weather lasted long enough for the trees to begin to bud and then, on February 7, 1895, even colder temperatures descended all the way to the Florida Keys where thermometers registered 17 degrees. The trees were killed and potential visitors to the area, hearing news of the record cold, decided not to visit.

The blow to the area's economy did not leave the library unscathed. At the December 1895 annual meeting the treasurer's report showed a balance of \$8.60. The feasibility of closing the library on Wednesdays was discussed but it was decided to continue.

Despite the drop in the library's income, the overall grimness of the time gave it an unexpected boost. Its book inventory rose to 1,058. Possibly some of those books were gifts donated by families moving from the area.

Rapid growth was followed by rapid decline and then stagnation. In 1894 the Winter Park population had risen to 658 but by 1900 it stood at only 638.

However, the advent of some new residents into the town, such as the wealthy Edward and Eda Brewer, gave fresh life to the library. A \$100 gift from an anonymous donor in 1896 enabled the library to buy books and the collection increased to 1,175. Still, times were difficult. In her librarian's report, Miss Lamson wrote that "believing that other enterprises in our place were in greater need of present help than the library, no entertainments were planned and no special effort put forth for raising funds."

Records of the annual meeting in 1887 showed only 20 people could afford the \$1 annual dues, the collection had grown by only 11 books that year and circulation was down.

Even so, one thing discussed then was the possibility of a new library building. Even during hard times there were still dreams.

## **ENTER THE 20TH CENTURY**

On January 31, 1900, President Comstock called a special meeting to consider a building and lot for the library. It was agreed that \$50 would go to the building fund provided enough money came from a Valentine's party scheduled for February 14 at The Palms, the new home of Edward and Eda Brewer on the shore of Lake Osceola.

Proceeds of that fund-raiser amounted to \$130.75 and the association moved ahead with its plans. The Knowles Estate, at last, donated property on Interlachen Avenue for the new building site.

Discussion of what should be included in the new building effectively set the library's policy for years to come because it was decided to include a children's department. By that December Eda Brewer was able to present building plans drawn by George D. Rand, a Boston architect.

The subscription list for the building fund shows that 24 individuals pledged a total of \$1,216 toward the effort. On February 7, 1901 the building committee contracted to build a public library, 24 by 50 feet in size, at a cost of \$1600. The library's books, now numbering almost 1,300, were moved into the building the last week of April.

Photographs of the new library show a small, white, clapboard building with a three-columned portico over the front door and twin three-paneled windows on either side. It sat well back from Interlachen Avenue behind its own wooden fence. Indoor plumbing was not part of the original design and, in the absence of modern insulation, complaints about heat in the summer and cold in the winter are recorded aspects of its history. It was one room, heated by open fireplaces situated one at each end of the room.



With the new building came expanded library hours. In addition to the Wednesday and Saturday hours it had kept since its founding, it was decided to open from 3 to 5 p.m. each day from January 15 to March 15. The owner of the Seminole Hotel guaranteed the money to pay a librarian to work the additional hours.

Fundraising was also a renewed concern. The decision was made to hold an afternoon tea each Wednesday to raise funds and also to petition the town council for \$7.46 to build a sidewalk in front of the library.

So began a fundraising combination that still exists today - outreach to the public and a financial commitment from the city government.

## **CHANGES**

The death in June 1902 of Eleanora Comstock who, with her husband, had been a resident since 1877, signalled (sic) another change for the library. As association president she had been particularly interested in encouraging children to use the library and, in her memory, her husband gave \$1,000 to endow the Children's Corner. It was named the Eleanora Comstock Corner.



Another significant event to occur that year was on the night of September 18. The Seminole Hotel was destroyed by fire. The hotel had been a great source of revenue for the town. In its first season, it had attracted 2,300 guests in three months and had to turn more away. The business generated by its clientele was so good the merchants of Park Avenue were able to simply close shop in the summer. And, it was also a good source of seasonal work.

However, nothing about the effects of this event showed up in the minutes of the Association's annual meeting. Instead, at its December 10 meeting Dr. William F. Blackman - who in April 1903 was installed as the new president of Rollins College - was elected president of the Association. He would hold that office for the next 16 years.

The fortunes of the Association began to rebound under the leadership of Blackman and, later, with Charles Hosmer Morse taking over the duties of the

town's primary property owner. Although he had been visiting the town since 1883, in 1904 Morse bought the remainder of the Knowles Estate's properties and proceeded to invest money in revitalizing orange groves neglected since the freeze and establishing new groves.

In her librarian's report for 1905, Evaline Lamson said: "It has been a year, not of building and finishing, but of enjoying the things worked for in former years."

In 1909, following her marriage to C. L. Smith, Evaline Lamson Smith retired as librarian after serving in that capacity almost continuously since 1887. Katherine Litch was then hired as the first salaried librarian. She was paid \$75 per year but only, apparently, whenever the Executive Committee had the cash.

Prosperity was beginning to reappear, due partly to Mr. Morse's efforts in revitalizing the local citrus industry and also because of the construction of a new, elegant Seminole Hotel in 1912. In 1914 the town council agreed to provide free electricity to the library building. Mr. Morse donated \$500 to add a kitchen wing to the library in 1914 and the city council was also asked to supply water to the kitchen and grounds.

The availability of a kitchen inspired the ladies of the library to continue a series of teas, fundraising socials and other events of interest to potential patrons. In later years these became a staple of the city's social season.

In 1924 two new wings and a lavatory were added to the building which, in effect, doubled in size. In 1927 two librarians worked on a year-round basis, with summer vacation, at salaries of \$50 per month.

In 1928, as the Florida land boom faded, Central Florida was hit by the advent of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly. Eradication and quarantine measures resulted in the destruction of more than 500,000 boxes of infected fruit and growers were not reimbursed for the loss.

More and more money worries began to plague the library. In 1930 the city council had agreed to give the library \$1,000 a year but that was cut to \$500 in 1932. Also, in 1930, the bank that held the library's accounts, the Bank of Winter Park, failed. An appeal for funds was sent out to members of the library's

Executive Committee who were at their summer homes in the north.

The appeals bore fruit and by 1932 the librarians were able to report that new books had been gifted to the library and circulation was up. The board felt confident enough to raise the head librarian's salary to \$65 a month.

## **SOMETHING TO CONSIDER**



The picture thus far is of a group of people dedicated to the idea of a lending library. But it was also a somewhat exclusive group that many residents apparently chose not to join. Of the just over 100 names of white town residents, drawn up by Ray A. Trovillion in 1968 to show his recollection of what the town was like in 1908, only 17 appear to have been consistently involved with the library.

It is important to remember that the library, at this time, exclusively served white townspeople. It is that factor that would lead in mid-1937 to a separate library being founded in the heart of the black residential community.

But, the change from private club to public library actually took place in the 1930s and during World War II when a large community of military servicemen and their families used the library extensively.

## **1945-1960**

In 1945, Winter Park was a town of 5,586 whose city limits extended to Lakemont Avenue on the east, Orlando Avenue on the west, roughly to present-day Lake Sue Avenue on the south, and to its current northern boundaries.

"Demobilization" was the current buzz word. The Sanford Naval Air Station and the Army Air Base on Lakemont were closed and young men returned to civilian life, but not always to their hometowns. Returning veterans added to the city's growth.

In August 1945 the Winter Park Herald newspaper noted that there was much building during the month of July and that the \$134,000 spent on building permits was a record for any month since March 1931.

At the Library the hours were now 2 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from September 1 to June 30. During the summer, when conditions in the library were probably unbearably hot, the hours were 10 a.m. to noon and 4 to 6 p.m. for six days. Almost everything in the city closed on Wednesday afternoons.

The library then had a collection numbering 12,269 and a circulation of 33,214.

During those years people were reading books such as: Forever Amber, Hobson's Gentlemen's Agreement, The Egg and I, Why They Behave Like Russians, The Great Rehearsal, A Light in the Window, and Always Murder A Friend.

It was also apparent to everyone that the library had outgrown its home. Growth and the demand for services, especially for the Children's Department, made it imperative that the library keep pace with the community.

In 1946, a major change in the library charter was proposed. It required trustees to serve three-year terms, with the terms staggered so that three of the nine seats would be elected each year. The mayor's ex- officio position on the board was officially recognized and the bylaws changed to provide for a regular schedule of meetings.

The proposal was for the board to meet the second Wednesday of March, June, September and December but it took them awhile to get into the new pattern of things. They instead met, for example, twice in March of 1947, once in April and once in November. At the annual meeting of 1947 the new provision was ratified and one new member was elected to the board, bringing the number to nine.

The immediate benefit of the new provision was that it brought new ideas and increased community participation at a time when both were of increasing importance.

A new head librarian was appointed in 1948, Charlotte Moughton, who quickly went to work to try and reduce the over-crowded conditions inside the library. She spent the summer of 1949 cleaning out the work room, mending and re-marking several hundred books while still maintaining regular services and the Vacation Reading Club.

In her first librarian's report she outlined six goals for the library. They included resuming a regular story time for children, a new lighting system, a new encyclopedia set, a new system of charging books, a good pamphlet and information file, and a new building.

Many of her suggestions were adopted within a year. New reference books were purchased, volunteers found for the children's story hour and \$1,800 received from the city commission for badly needed repairs and alterations. In the fall of 1950, new shelves were added in every room, additional electrical wiring installed so lamps could be placed in dark corners and a new exterior door was added to the building's south end for easy access to the Children's Department.

These improvements, along with repairs to the roof, a new awning, a new coat of paint inside and out, and a new sign, were as close to a new library as they would get for another five years. Instead, the townspeople were consumed with another project, that of building a community hospital.

The efforts at the library therefore went into improving service and attracting new members. The children's story hour was maintained with the help of volunteers, some of them from Rollins College. The Vacation Reading Club was under the personal supervision of the Children's Librarian, Helen Foley Fuller. Each year she came up with a different theme to pique the imagination of young readers.

The theme in 1950 was Treasure Island; in 1951 it was a Circus Club; in 1952, a rodeo and the Toggery clothing store donated a mannequin dressed in western gear. In 1953 readers were Rocket Jockeys, while in 1954 they sailed the Seven Seas, and in 1955 went Undersea with Wilbur the mannequin making a return appearance togged out in snorkeling gear. It was time to stimulate Indians in 1957, and 1958 saw the orbit of Booknik.



The library continued to serve as the school library for the Winter Park Elementary School. However, during the early 1950's the consistent theme was the library building.either lack of space in, need for repairs to, or hoped-for replacement of.

Charlotte Moughton lobbied the board in each of her librarian's report and perhaps lobbied others as well. In 1951, when the new Mills Memorial Library at Rollins was dedicated, an editorial in the Herald newspaper commented that "It would be a tribute to the spirit of Winter Park if in the near future friends of the public library could similarly bring about a much needed new library building."

On February 17, 1955, one month after the new hospital opened, a meeting of the library board was called to consider building plans. It had already been decided that the building plan could begin with one room and that the building plan could begin with one room and that a children's room would be feasible. The cost was estimated at \$12,500 and the board, under President Mary Brownlee Wattles, approved the plan.

A fundraising letter was sent out stating that a new building was badly needed. "The present frame building is outdated, overcrowded, and a fire hazard," it said in part.

By January of 1956, with the newspaper featuring new city growth records for 1955, the board first viewed plans for the Children's Room. Constructed of concrete block with aluminum windows, it was as modern as the old building was quaint. Bids were opened in mid-March and Allen Trovillion's bid of \$9,490 was accepted. On November 1 the public was invited to the library for an all-day Open House to see the freshly completed Children's Room.



In January 1957 work began on the central section, built across the front of the old library, facing Interlachen. Despite an anonymous \$10,000 donation, fundraising demanded a lot of attention throughout 1957. The new section was completed in August-September that year. The push was then on to raise money for the final phase.

The Winter Park Jaycees conducted a 10-month campaign to raise money for the library. They began with a doorbell-ringing campaign, in early October 1957, which raised \$13,000. By December 1957, \$25,000 of the \$75,000 needed for the project had been raised. By May \$55,000 had been raised and books were moved out of the old building later that month.

The completion of the new library building was celebrated on March 20, 1959. Under the vigorous leadership of Mary Brownlee Wattles, the total \$130,000 cost of the new facility had been raised entirely through donations from the community. The new building, fully air-conditioned with mint-green walls and terazzo floors, also had a walled garden established by the Winter Park Garden Club.



## **THE FRIENDS**

As the library prepared to move into a new decade, librarian Charlotte Moughton had taken steps to cement its roots within the community. With her encouragement, a meeting was called on February 28, 1958, to organize a Friends of the Library Association. More than 150 charter members signed their names, paid 41 annual dues, and elected Clinton J. Ruch as their first president.



The first activity of the Association was apparently to promote the library as a forum for discussion and literary information. Their first sponsored program was a review of Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. It attracted 300 people and was an indication of how the group kept pace with the times for the discussion took place before Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

One of the first topics addressed in a series by the discussion group was the Middle East and, in 1963, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was the subject of a review.

The Friends also began mailing a newsletter to publicize their book reviews and their monthly current events program as well as library services and new books. As the group expanded it began to perform other tasks such as providing volunteer services and donations of equipment and money.

By February 1960, one year after the new library was opened, circulation had risen from 90,842 in 1959 to 108,659. The city also agreed to increase its appropriation to the library which helped it to expand its hours and place on-hire three full-time employees, one part-time and two high school pages.

## **THE ORDERLY 60'S**

The decade of the 60's, at least where the library was concerned, was characterized by orderly growth. The city's population grew from 17,162 in 1960 to 21,895 in 1970 and the library, in an effort to keep pace, increased its staff from three to nine while its budget went from \$26,300 to \$57,975. Circulation rose to 181,206 in 1969.



Probably the most exotic item to appear at the library during that decade was a set of two electric charging machines. Each one stamped the borrower's identification number on the book's identification card. This modernization method required a lot of effort to implement - each patron had to be re-registered and issued new cards - but created a more efficient system for the library's staff.

As part of its responsibility to the community, the board made a concerted effort to keep its finances on a businesslike level. Board member and accountant Lynn Pflug undertook the major task of reconstructing a financial history of the library from March of 1950 to October 31, 1961, and thereafter submitted monthly financial statements to the president, finance committee chairman and librarian.

The board also approved a statement that any funds derived from legacies would be used for investment, not for operating costs, thereby building the library's endowment.

## **THE HANNIBAL SQUARE LIBRARY**

The Hannibal Square Library had been in operation since 1937, when it was founded by Dr. Edwin O. Grover of Rollins, in memory of his wife who had been an activist in the cause of education for the black community. It had also functioned as an independent library for many years, appealing to its community and friends for funds.

In the 1950s it began receiving regular appropriations from the city, though on a smaller scale than that received by the Winter Park Public Library. In 1955 it completed its own Children's Room addition.





The library was popular with children and local organizations used it for evening meetings. Neighbors maintained the grounds and donated and planted shrubbery and flowers to beautify it.



The Board of Directors of the Hannibal Square Library was composed of black and white residents.

In 1962 and 1963 the Board of the Winter Park Public Library adopted policy statements to provide library service to the residents of Winter Park, irrespective of age, race, creed, color or financial situation.

In November 1967, then city manager James Harris wrote a letter to the heads of the two libraries boards, asking that they consider the possibility of combining the two as a main library and a branch. "The city is not attempting to decrease the amount of its budget for library support, but we are interested in the possibility of making one contribution which would provide the greatest possible return to our citizens," Harris said.

At a January 18, 1968 meeting of representatives of both libraries, a letter was read stating that the citizens of the black community did not oppose the merger but did want to keep a library in the neighborhood. At that time the librarian for the Hannibal Square Library was Mildred Carter and it was open three mornings and four afternoons a week.

At the meetings it was decided to maintain the Hannibal Square Library and that two of its board members should serve on a board overseeing both libraries.

## **ONWARD TO 100 YEARS**

The Winter Park Public Library opened the 70's with the dedication of the Mary Brownlee Wattles Wing on February 17, 1970. Again, the problem of space was of utmost concern to board members and library patrons alike. The need was urgent enough that the board voted to use funds in the equipment and maintenance fund to begin construction even before undertaking a successful fund-raising drive in the fall of 1969.

The new wing contained a meeting room, which was available to civic groups as well as an expanded reference area and storage room. The cost this time was \$32,000.

The space crunch for library materials was more than matched by the parking crunch outside. The library had only thirteen parking spaces and regularly discussed sharing parking with the neighboring All Saints Church.

In March 1974 the board discussed building another addition to the library. This time the suggestion was to add a second floor for a librarian's office and work space. A study committee was appointed. The matter was again discussed in March 1975 but, in May, another possibility was presented by board President Rachel D. Murrah. Discussions began in earnest about building an entirely new facility at another location.

Realizing that such a project would be larger than ever contemplated, the board decided to move cautiously. It was November before a five-member expansion committee was appointed to research library needs and its future ability to serve its community. Events then began to move rapidly. The expansion committee's report, given in January 1976, discussed the need for more parking - which was impossible at the current site - the need for more shelf space and the unlikely prospect of being able to expand the building.

The board then approached the city to buy a 1.5-acre parcel of land, at New England and Chase Avenues, that had been identified as a choice location for the new library.

On March 9 the city commission appropriated \$9,000 to buy an option on the property and gave the board until October to develop preliminary plans, locate funding and devise procedures for accomplishing a large project.

The first task was to canvass city residents for contributions to a building fund. Each board member was assigned a list of people to contact.

By May they had raised almost \$70,000 and in September 1976 the city purchased the property for \$300,000.

Also in 1976, there was a Federal program of grants to communities to begin new construction and create jobs. The library, which had architectural plans and specifications ready, asked the city to submit them as part of its request to the Federal Government. The application was submitted in October 1976 but, in early 1977, word came that it had been denied.

Shoving disappointment aside, however, the building committee kept up its search for a funding source. One was desperately needed because the new library was expected to cost \$900,000. In July, 1977 it was announced that the Federal Government had appropriated more funds for its program and would give the city a \$2.7 million grant. The library received \$945,000 of that for construction of its new building.

Ground was broken December 4, 1977, and construction took 14 months.



On October 22, 1978, Charlotte Moughton Brunoehler died. She had come to Winter Park 30 years before to take over the operations of a small community library and had overseen its growth and, indeed, pushed for it. It was agreed that the reference room in the new library be established in Charlotte's memory.

In 1979 the Hannibal Square Library was closed due to a decline in circulation and the building and grounds were returned to the city's council.

In February 1979 the move was made to the new library at 460 E. New England Avenue. It had nearly twice the square footage of the Interlachen building and sixty-five parking spaces instead of thirteen. The formal dedication was held April 20, 1979, and in June the old library building was sold to the All Saints Church. The proceeds, \$218,000, were equally divided with the city to help defray the cost of the original land purchase.

The library's efforts did not go unnoticed. The Florida Library Association presented its Trustees and Friends Library Award in 1979 to Rachel D. Murrah for her efforts for her efforts in bringing the project to fruition.

The new building was both an accomplishment and a challenge. The larger

materials collection required a larger staff and the larger building required additional maintenance. Although the city gave \$180,000 to the library's budget in 1980 the total library budget was \$221,000. Fundraising became a fine art.

## **NOW THE TALE IS TOLD**

The library, ineligible for funding from the state, continued to rely on its strong ties to the community for support. Income, which in 1885 had begun with memberships, fines and gifts of cash and books, evolved by 1985 into city support, income from investments, gifts, non-resident fees, rentals of books and meeting rooms, an annual fundraiser, book sales, and fees for photocopy services.



The relationship between the library and the city commission became more clearly defined during the early 1980s. (Although the city owns the library building, it is leased for \$1 a year to the Winter Park Library Association. The city contributes to the library's budget and the association supplements that with funds raised within the community.)

The board voted to make the commissioner serving as representative to the board a full voting member. In turn, the library was asked to display the Best of Show award winners from the annual Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival. In the fall of 1980, the library's Community Room began to be used as an election polling site.

To celebrate its Centennial year, the Board of Trustees agreed to publish a Centennial Calendar, featuring advertising art from the citrus industry. To accompany the calendar, a special exhibit was mounted at the Cornell Fine Arts Gallery, at Rollins, to display citrus industry and library memorabilia. The calendar was given to each card-holding family and additional copies were sold.

**ALL AROUND THE LIBRARY** was the theme for the Centennial Birthday Party and Picnic held December 14, 1985 on the library grounds.

Carolers mingled with the crowd, and birthday cake and hot dogs were available to the many enjoying the legacy created by a few women 100 years before.

On that day in 1985, with the sun warming the red bricks and glinting off the

plate-glass windows of the imposing two-story building, there was little to indicate its humble beginnings on Miss Lamson's porch or simple ambitions voiced so long ago.

In 1885, a group of women gathered in a room warmed by a log fire and debated the creation of an institution to help civilize an outpost carved from lands which still bore the images of its first inhabitants, the Seminole Indians.

Hooker, Lamson, Cady, McClure, Guild, Ladd, Clark, Cook and Brown. . . women of ideas with tenacity. The lending library that they helped found and nurture continues today with much the same spirit of volunteerism supported by community donations. Their legacy stands as proof of the real need and desire that they saw in a small Florida outpost called Winter Park, all those years ago.

## **THANK YOU**

At the beginning of the library's Second Century, its Board recognized the need for additional financial support from the community and began seeking bequests for its endowment fund and grants for special items.



By far the largest bequest received came in early 1989 from the Estate of Joanne Woolley, the granddaughter of Edward and Eda Brewer. It has helped significantly to enhance the library's fiction and reference collections. Other bequests have also helped the library to keep increased costs from being passed on to the public at large. Notable grants have been received from Philip and Peggy Crosby through the Crossroads Foundation, the Chesley G. Magruder Foundation, Inc., the Whiting Foundation, A. Friend's Foundation Trust, and the Sarah B. Galloway Foundation. Matching funds were received from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Another significant matching gift was received from a local resident who wishes to remain anonymous.

A former Trustee, Virginia Nelson, continues to give an important monetary gift to the library each year.

Special thanks go to loyal annual donors and to the dedicated Friends of the Winter Park Public Library.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Winter Park Public Library provides the materials, services and facility necessary to meet the current and future informational and recreational reading needs of Winter Park's residents. Special emphasis is placed on offering popular materials, and reference materials and services. Resources for independent learning, as well as current and historic local information are also important. Materials and services appropriate to all ages, including preschoolers, are available. In addition to print media, the library collections may include non-print and electronic media. Mutually beneficial, cooperative agreements, which lead to improved library services for the community by avoiding duplication, will be initiated by the library with other area libraries and institutions.

## **ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS**

1885-88	Elizabeth Hooker
1888	Mrs. Paul
1890-92	Elizabeth Hooker
1893	Mrs. Ford
1894	Mrs. Baker
1895-96	Mrs. Ford
1897-1902	Ella K. Comstock
1902-17	W.F. Blackman
1918-25	Evaline Lamson Smith
1926	Eda H. Brewer
1927-29	Edward W. Packard

1929-35	Richard Wright
1935-44	H.M. Sinclair
1945-48	George Woodbury
1948-55	Herbert Hirshberg
1955-65	Mary Brownlee Wattles
1965-70	Kenneth Wacker
1970-73	Herman Gade
1973-76	Francis Jackson
1976-79	Rachel D. Murrah
1979-80	Fred Hicks
1980-81	Alan Price
1981-83	Clifford Hames
1983-85	Alan Price
1985-86	John Fleming
1986-88	Polly Seymour
1988-89	Rachel D. Murrah

## **HEAD LIBRARIANS & DIRECTORS**

1885-86	Mrs. W.O. Cady
1887-91	Evaline Lamson

1892	Mrs. P. Barrows
1893-1908	Evaline Lamson
1909	Evaline Lamson Smith
1909-18	Katherine Litch
1921-24	Elizabeth Merriwether
1924-30	Inez Bellows
1930-37	Verna H. Goodwin and Trixie Vincent
1937-42	Marie-Lousie Sterrett
1942-43	Winifred Herron
1943-45	Hazel Sawyer
1946-48	Margaret Teague Farrar
1948-79	Charlotte Moughton Brunoehler
1979-87	Wendy Kay Robuck Breedon, Director
1987-Present	Robert Melanson, Director

Resource material for "From Miss Lamson's Porch" was obtained from a complete record of library association minutes, old newspapers and scrapbooks, interviews with appropriate parties, and local history memorabilia in the Winter



Park Public Library and the Olin Library of Rollins College.

Funds for the publication of the booklet were derived from the sale of the Library Centennial Calendar and a generous donation from the Friends of the Winter Park Public Library.

Technical assistance was provided by Nathalia B. Brodie, Margaret Duer, Eleanor Y. Fisher and Rachel D. Murrah.

