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## Osceola Library System

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# **Florida Library History Project**

## **Osceola Library System**

### **OSCEOLA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM MILESTONES**

Celebration of National Library Week

1:00 P. M., Sunday, April 13, 1997

#### **1910**

- Hart Memorial Library Building Erected at 400 Mabbette Street, Kissimmee.
- Women's Club of St. Cloud formed.

#### **1914**

- Hart Memorial Chapter of the American Women's League chartered.

#### **1916**

- Library deeded by City of Kissimmee to Hart Memorial Chapter and officially named "Hart Memorial Library".

#### **1923**

- Veterans Memorial Library at 1012 Massachusetts Avenue, St. Cloud dedicated by Women \* Club of St Cloud.

#### **1956**

- City of Kissimmee increases stipend for Hart Memorial Librarian from \$20 to \$50 per month.

#### **1968**

- State Librarian issues report on "Library Service in Osceola County".
- Osceola County Board of County Commissioners agree to assume responsibility for libraries. Paid for through County's General Fund. Cities of Kissimmee and St. Cloud to provide buildings. Operated by Contract with Orlando Public Library (Orange County Library District).

## **1969**

- Hart Memorial Library moved to former Rexall Drug Store at 305 Broadway Avenue and renamed Kissimmee Library.

## **1972-1974**

- Veterans Memorial Library moved to former Bank Building at New York Avenue and 10th Street in St. Cloud.

## **1978**

- Voters pass Referendum authorizing a Countywide Library Tax up to 0.5 Mils.

## **1979**

- Countywide Osceola Library District established.

## **1986**

- City of Kissimmee voters approve bond issue to acquire lakefront property, including portion for future library site.
- H.B. Waters, Inc, Dallas, Texas submits Osceola County Library Master Plan
- County Commission raises Library Tax to full 0.5 mile from former 0.19 mils.

## **1987**

- Landstar, the developer of Buenaventura Lakes(BVL), donates a 2 Acre Site at 405 BVL Boulevard for future library site.
- Avatar, the developer of Poinciana, signs a ground lease agreement with the County to provide a library site at 33 Doverplum Center.

## **1988**

- Rogers, Lovelock Architects, winter Park, provide Proto-Type Library Design for up to three new Osceola County Library Buildings.
- October 21st: New Poinciana Community Library Porta-Structure grand opening.

## **1989**

- January 3rd: Osceola County's first Library Department Director, Heater O'Leary starts work.
- March 7: City of Kissimmee donates 2 acres of planned Mickler Site acquisition for new library. Final settlement on Mickler Site August 1st.
- April 1: Osceola County\* Library District and Department begin independent operations. Contract for Orange County Library District to operate Osceola County Libraries ends.

## **1990**

- January: Grand Opening of New Buenaventura Lakes Community Library.
- Opening of Jail Outreach Library Program.

## **1991**

- Opening of McClaren Circle Urban Outreach Children's Library.

## **1994**

- January: Grand Opening of Osceola County 's Hart Memorial Central Library.

## **1995**

- April: Grand Opening of Nell' St. Cloud Veterans Memorial Community Library.
- April: Book Collection donated for Hopkins Park Community Center Urban Outreach Program.

## **1998**

- Projected Opening of New Poinciana Community Library.

## **Library Has Long, Interesting History**

By Mrs. Essie Dale

1957

For 50 years loyal, versatile and civic minded Kissimmee women have been active in promoting and carrying on intellectual and cultural projects in the picturesque Hart Memorial Library building.

It was in 1910 that this building was erected on lots given by Mrs. Carrie S. Hart, widow of Osian V. Hart, the first and only Republican governor of the State of Florida.

A promoter was employed by 21 of the city's most prominent women who contributed \$52 each and solicited with this, other funds from the citizenry for the erection of the building. Later, the promoter was convicted of fraud and served a penitentiary sentence, but Kissimmee was fortunate in being the only city to retain its building. This was due to the fact that the lots had previously been donated to them by Mrs. Hart.

Due to the lack of facilities for rest and relaxation, the building was used as a civic center where traders coming to the city from a distance could leave their wives and children until their business was concluded.

In 1914, a charter was issued to the Hart Memorial Chapter of, the American Woman's League "for promoting social intercourse among its members, and for educational, literary, debating and scientific purposes" with the following officers, all now deceased, serving the 21 charter members: Mrs. W. J. S. Carr, president; Mrs. Clay Johnson, vice president; Mrs. C. A. Carson, treasurer; Mrs. P. K. Winn, secretary Directors were Mrs. E Aultman, Mrs. Edith Cline Bullock and Mrs. Dora Lee.

Realizing that freedom to read is one of democracy's most cherished liberties, and that all should have the privilege of pursuing this liberty, Arthur A. Donegan, Osceola County Clerk in 1916, interested Mrs. Anne Palmer Fell, upon the death of her husband, Nelson Fell, in giving to this organization the books and furnishings of the large library she had maintained in Narcoossee.

It was at this time that the Hart Memorial Chapter of the American Woman's League was designated as "The Hart Memorial Library". The first officers were: Miss Elizabeth Donegan, president; Mrs. W. B. Makinson Sr., vice president; Mrs. S. H. Bullock, secretary; Mrs. A. W. Winn, treasurer; Miss Elizabeth Aultman, chairman of the Library Committee and directors were Mrs. J. Z. Roberson and Mrs. S. H. Bullock.

For many years the Hart Memorial Library was supported by the small fee charged for the rental of books and by the money making projects promoted by the organization. Later, the city council, becoming cognizant of the need, appropriated \$20 per month to be used for the librarian's salary. Recently this amount has been increased to \$50. Civic organizations and private citizens also became interested and have assisted when the need arose.

During the 40 year's functioning of the library, there have been only three librarians, Mrs H. C. Stanford, Miss France Bay and the present incumbent Mrs. Rosa Woodall.

At the present time, \$20 is used each month for the purchase of the latest "best

sellers" selected by the book committee. These added to the approximately 200` volumes already on the shelves furnish excellent reading an reference material for the citizens and their winter visitors.

In the evenings civic clubs and private individuals use the buildings for their meetings and parties. Mrs. Marcella Tindall serve the group as president during the absence of Miss Lizzie Donegar. Serving. with her are Mrs. W. I Makinson Jr. as secretary an Mrs. Harry Dale as treasurer.

Newly elected members of the Library Committee are Mrs. Emo Griffin, Mrs. William Sippe Mrs. Ed Whaley and Mrs. Hewe Lasseter.

Library Clean-up. Members of the Hart Memorial Library Committee met Thursday to sort the books on the shelves, keeping the best in reading and reference material. The committee membes shown above are, left to right, Mrs. William Sippel, Mrs. Elmo Griffin, Mrs. Marcella Tindall, Mrs. Rosa Woodall and Mrs. Harry Dale. (Photo by Cooper).**Note:** *Image scanned from photocopy.*



**[From the Osceola County Library System - Library Director, Bill Johnson]**

January 14, 1998

The Osceola County Library System has undergone rapid growth since we broke away from the Orange County Library System in 1989. Osceola County libraries carry more than 400,000 total volumes, which include books, audio visuals and CDROMs. On a yearly basis, we lent more than 600,000 volumes. The Central Library, which has 300,000 volumes, is in Kissimmee; Buenaventuraa Lakes has 32,000 volumes, St. Cloud 32,000 volumes and Poinciana is the smallest of them all, but a new, bigger branch is scheduled to open in May of 1998. It will consist 40,000 volumes, and will be 12,000 square feet, compared to 1,600 square feet we have now. Our hours of operation per week are 273. The total for the year of operation is 3,276 hours.

We also provide three outreach facilities to accommodate the community. McLaren Circle, and Hopkins Park have 600 volumes, and Kenansville carries

1,600 volumes. The county is in the process of extending our service to the community of Celebration which is in West Osceola County some time this year.

The Osceola County Library System has a new director. Mr. Bill Johnson served as the assistance director for 21/2 years before being appointed on November 17, 1997, as the Library Director. At the current time Mr. Johnson oversees 76 county employees.