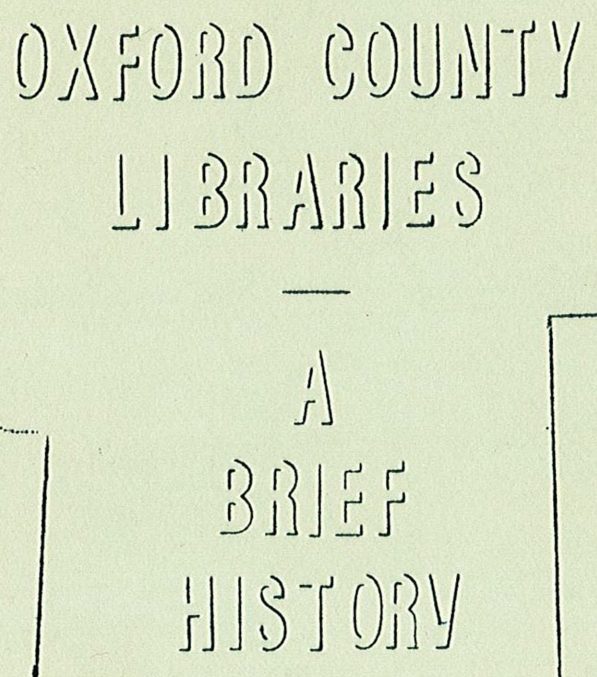


W. H. Elgin



OXFORD COUNTY
LIBRARIES
—
A
BRIEF
HISTORY

FORWARD

The short histories of the branch libraries were prepared from minute books, local papers, pamphlets and from residents who could recall the early days in the local areas.

Some articles are just as they were written and others have been changed slightly to shorten the lengths. It was impossible to include all of the names from each area but I have tried to include those who headed the main committees when the libraries were organized.

As well as thanking the librarians who sent in the histories, I would like to include Mrs. R. Edwards of Beachville and Mrs. A. Burton of Hickson.

LOUISE KROMPART,
COUNTY LIBRARIAN.

Librarians in 1969

Beachville	Mrs. W. E. Brooker
Brownsville	Mrs. T. Nant
Burgessville	Mrs. W. Welch
Drumbo	Mrs. Ralph Racknor
East Oxford	Mrs. J. Yeoman
Embro	Mrs. Myrtle McCorquodale
Harrington	Mrs. A. Kittmer
Hickson	Mrs. Flossie Pullen
Innerkip	Mrs. Wm. Elliott
Kintore	Mrs. H. Haynes
Ingersoll	Miss Betty Crawford
Mount Elgin	Mrs. D. Fleming
Norwich	Miss Louise Lossing
Otterville	Mr. T. E. Petch
Plattsville	Mrs. Wm. Bell
Princeton	Mrs. C. Gurney
Tavistock	Mrs. H. Schwartzentruber
Thamesford	Miss A. Mackay

OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY

The Oxford County Library had its beginning on February 12, 1936 when Mr. R. E. Crouch of the London Public Library addressed a group in Thamesford, using as his subject, "County Library Associations and how one has worked in Middlesex County".

At the March meeting of the Thamesford Board a committee was formed to list the libraries in the county who would be interested in a county library association.

In April the committee reported that Woodstock did not wish to take part, but the Ingersoll Library Board asked that a meeting be held in the Ingersoll Library to discuss the matter. Mr. Crouch addressed a meeting in Ingersoll on September 25th and on November 13th, a meeting was held in Woodstock and the Oxford County Library Association was organized.

Miss Blythe Terryberry of the Woodstock Public Library and Miss Betty Crawford of the Ingersoll Library are to be highly commended for the work they put into the new association. They were responsible for buying the books with the funds derived from the \$15 fee which the member libraries contributed. The books were processed in the Woodstock Library and divided into units, which were placed in boxes. Every three months some members of the library boards would come into the Woodstock Library and exchange the boxes of books. When the books had travelled to all of the libraries, they were divided and placed in the libraries permanently.

In 1947 a course was given in London which granted a librarian taking it an E certificate, and twelve librarians from Oxford County took advantage of this.

New provincial legislation made possible the formation of library co-operatives and on April 7th, 1948, the Oxford County Library Co-operative had its first meeting, with Mr. R. C. Brogden of Ingersoll as Chairman, and Miss Betty Crawford as Secretary-treasurer.

A budget of \$1,000 was drawn up with \$700 to be spent on books.

At the annual meeting a constitution was adopted. The constitution was based on one drawn up at a recent County Library Conference.

In 1949 Mr. Brogden presented a budget to County Council amounting to \$5,300. The County Council granted \$2,000 and the rest was obtained from the provincial grant and membership fees.

A tribute should be paid to Mr. Angus Mowat of the Provincial Library Service for his untiring efforts in assisting with the formation of County libraries and for the splendid conferences he arranged for the county libraries who were organizing a new type of rural library service.

In 1949 Mr. L. K. Coles was appointed Treasurer and Mrs. S. L. Krompart became Librarian. These two appointments have remained the same through the years.

A room in the Court House was furnished as library head quarters and some books were purchased. The librarian visited several county libraries and all of the Oxford libraries, and for the first few years the books were distributed by car. The books travelled from one library to another with a few new books being added in each unit. Mrs. Krompart was assisted by her husband who worked part-time with the library until his death in 1960.

For two years the librarian gave a radio talk from the local radio station C.K.O.X which helped to advertise the services.

A library workshop was held in the fall of 1949. These workshops have been held annually and the discussion of library problems has been of great value to the librarians in the county.

In 1950 sixty-five applications for school room service had been received and it was decided to begin to visit the schools in September. The School Boards agreed to pay \$10 per classroom and 25 books were given to each classroom for a period of three months.

The County Council granted \$50 per month to the libraries in the county and \$20 of this was paid as a fee for membership in the county library.

Mrs. W. G. Cocker joined the library staff as a part-time clerical assistant in 1951. Through the years Mrs. Cocker has been of great assistance and is now capably handling the bookmobile visits to the schools.

1953 was an important year in the Oxford County Library. A new room was opened in the Court House for the library and a bookmobile was purchased.

A book review contest for students in grades seven and eight was held in 1958. This has been held each year in Young Canada's Book Week and many boys and girls have taken part; some years over two hundred entries were received.

Early in the 1960's library services began to expand. Meetings were held to discuss county public libraries. Following the lead of Middlesex County the Oxford County Council passed a by-law in 1964 which led the formation of the Oxford County Public Library system. Explaining the system to library boards, municipal executives and others required a great deal of travelling around the county. Mr. Coles, Mr. Rudy and the librarian met with many committees. When the new system began in 1965, the Central Board visited all of the libraries in the county discussing problems with the local committees.

Mr. Coles, as treasurer, had a great deal of reorganizing to do since all expenses were now paid from the Central headquarters. Insurance policies had to be reassessed and Mr. Coles and his staff took on a great deal of extra work in looking after the financial problems of the branch libraries.

Workshops were held to try to bring more similarity into the library service around the county. With the increased financial support which the new system brought, the book budget was increased and the central staff took on the processing of all the new books. Since all membership fees were eliminated circulation soared.

A second graduate librarian, Miss Jane Menzies (Mrs. Arthur Webb) joined the staff in June of 1965. Mrs. Webb took on the job of weeding the collections of books in the branch libraries and of classifying those which had not been done in the branches previously. The book collections began to look much more attractive and circulation improved.

Not only did the book collections become more attractive, but the libraries themselves began to improve in appearance as paint, new furniture, drapes and other needs were looked after by the County Library Board. The County Library Board was very busy during the first few years of the new system and the County Council's idea of appointing ex-wardens, Mr. Robert Rudy, Mr. Grant Smith and Mr. William Sutherland proved a good one, for these gentlemen knew the municipalities and were capable members of the Board.

Because of increased circulation, it became necessary to open some of the small branches for longer periods. The libraries were now able to assist students from kindergarden to university level by contacting the central library for books which were not in their collections. By 1969 considerably over 3,000 books were mailed to the branches for this purpose.

Some branch libraries came into the system with very good buildings, or quarters but others required complete renovation. Embro and Otterville were greatly improved and a small branch was started at Innerkip. The Centennial year was a boon to the system too. North Norwich and Burgessville built a fine new library at Burgessville and East Oxford converted a school into township offices and a library, with the county library assisting in buying the necessary furniture.

Not least of the Centennial projects was the new central library known as the Oxford County Library in Woodstock. Many people, seeing it for the first time expressed great admiration for the library with its African mahogany woodwork, the soft green carpeting and the touches of green, gold and persimmon which gave a little colour. The County Council are to be commended for making possible this useful and attractive building. The list of names of the Centennial Committee on the plaque include the following:

Wardens - Harry Armstrong, Hugh Munro, J. Vernon Cuthbert.

Reeves - Gordon Aspden, Fred Caddy, Leslie E. Force, Murray Older, Elmer Karn,
Harold Kipp, J. C. Smith

Librarian - Louise Krompart ... Treasurer - L. K. Coles

Designer - G. Duncan Black ... Contractor - R. J. Yohn

In 1964 the Lake Erie Regional Library System was formed including the Counties of Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford. Mr. Robert Rudy became our representative on the Lake Erie Board. In the first few years the Regional Board donated funds which were very useful in buying some reference books for the branches. The Inter-library loan and film systems have been valuable, as have the workshops which were organized by Region. The discussions of library problems by the Committee of Librarians have been valuable in helping the members to broaden their ideas of library services.

One cannot look back on the achievements of the County Library without paying great tribute to the librarians of the branches. They have been very patient with the changes that have taken place and have co-operated in all the work involved in library services. They have spent many extra hours and made many trips to the central library and the post office to carry back special books to their readers, and always their public relations and friendliness has been appreciated by the central staff.

In a few places too small for a library, deposit stations were formed and the library has been very grateful to the women who have had these deposit stations in their homes. There have been deposit stations at:-

Bright - Mrs. M. Cuthbertson
Brooksdale - Mrs. E. Symons
Dereham Centre - Mrs. R. Ellis
Salford -(formerly Mrs. Nancekivell) now Mrs. E. Yoworski
Springford - Mrs. W. Oatman
Sweaburg - Mrs. G. K. Hammerton
Uniondale - Mrs. E. C. Greason

The school teachers, too, have co-operated in helping with the book exchanges at the schools and our work with them has been pleasant.

Mr. L. K. Coles has been of great assistance in helping with the library plans all through the years. As treasurer of the County Council, as well as the County Library Board, he became a valuable liaison between the two, and his willingness to assist with any library problem has earned him the respect and gratitude of the whole library system.

1969 leaves the County Library with still much to do in making library service what it should be in all parts of the county, but it has some accomplishments of which it can be proud,- a circulation of 501,674, an increased staff, improved salaries, branches open longer periods, a book budget of \$49,950 shows quite a growth from the beginning in 1936 when a few libraries traded boxes of books.

LOUISE KROMPART,
LIBRARIAN.

OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH LIBRARIES

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BEACHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

On December 28th, 1901, a fee of 50¢ was paid to register a declaration of the establishment of a public library in the village of Beachville.

The first librarian was Dr. W. J. Beasley with a salary of 25¢ per week. James Dickie acted as assistant.

The library was housed in a room in the Templar's Hall, near the mill dam, on what is now the C.P.R. right of way. It had originally been a Presbyterian church. In 1896 the Methodists had sold the old frame church to the Royal Templar's Lodge. In 1929 the two surviving members of the Hall, deeded the property to the village of Beachville for one dollar, on condition that it should be used for library purposes. This building was used until 1962.

In 1962 the West Oxford Township Hall was purchased by the village and was converted into Council Chambers and a Public Library. The library was attractively decorated with panelled walls and new lighting and shelves were added. It was opened officially on November 21, 1962. Officials taking part included Reeve J. C. Smith, Chairman Alfred Cowell and the librarian Mrs. W. E. Brooker.

In 1957 the library became a free public library supported by a per capita tax. It had become a member of the Oxford County Library Co-operative and in 1965 it became a branch of the Oxford County Library.

Librarians through the years have been Dr. W. J. Beasley, William Lucy, Herbert Wilton, Percy Karn, Wallace Turner, William Elliott, Mrs. Henry Edwards, Mrs. Newell Fordon, Miss Bessie Hacker. Mrs. W. E. Brooker is the Librarian at present, assisted by Mrs. R. Edwards.

The circulation in 1969 was 3,957. The library is open Tuesdays-3.30 - 5.30, Thursday, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. and Saturday, 3.00 to 5.00 p.m.

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BROWNSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Brownsville Library has made four moves to accomodate its growth since its beginning at the first of the century.

The original library was housed in a room under the general store in 1906. Later it was moved to a small building where it was possible to include a reading room.

In 1920 a frame building one block north of the main corner was made into a library providing more space.

The community hall was renovated in 1948 and permanent library quarters were arranged on the lower floor. The old building was destroyed a few weeks before the

new one was ready. Most of the books were saved.

A year later the Oxford County Library was formed and books were on loan for three month periods.

In 1965 the Brownsville Library became a branch of the Oxford County Library. The ~~present~~ librarian has been serving in her present position since 1941.

In 1969 the circulation of books was 4,808. The library is open on Thursday, 6.30 - 8.30, Saturday, 9.00 - 11.00. The Librarian is Mrs. T. Nant.

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BURGESSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

In 1910 a meeting, mainly sponsored by the Women's Institute, was held in Burgessville to form a library. The library functioned at first as a Mechanic's Institute and a library of books was purchased from the Briggs Publishing Company. The first president was Mr. Hendershott and the first librarian was Miss May Dennis.

The record books tell the story of progress and development. In the earlier years, to supply the necessary funds, the Board sponsored a number of money raising projects, such as box socials, mock parliaments, concerts and plays. The Board also took advantage of every opportunity to supply good reading material, using the Provincial Travelling Library and in 1937 joining the Oxford County Library Association, which became a co-operative in 1949 and the Oxford County Library in 1965.

The first Burgessville library was housed in part of a building owned by Mr. William Kirkpatrick. This building burned, but the books were saved and moved to a small house on the farm of Elias Snyder. The top floor of the Post Office was the next library and following this it was moved to the basement of the Municipal Telephone office.

In 1967 the North Norwich Centennial Committee chose a library building as it's centennial project and the Burgessville Library is now an attractive building with up-to-date furniture, curtains, etc., the Oxford County Library having assisted with the furnishings.

The Women's Institute has been of assistance down through the years and the contributions of Mrs. E. Chant and Mrs. A. Dickinson, the librarians from 1949 to 1965 have been of great value in the progress of the library.

Since the Burgessville Library became a branch of the Oxford County Library in 1965, Mrs. W. Welch has been the librarian.

The circulation in 1969 was 15,698 and the library is open Tuesdays and Saturdays, 1.30 - 5.45 and Thursdays, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m.

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DRUMBO PUBLIC LIBRARY

On March 5, 1900 at a regular meeting of the Drumbo Mutual Improvement Society, it was unanimously agreed to appropriate the funds of the Society to the beginning of a public library. The first chairman was the Rev. W. K. Shearer, Dr. Mitchell became the librarian and housed the books in his drug store. There were 98 members in the first year.

The Township Council gave the first grant of \$20 and through the years, grants were received from the Province, the County, the Township, the Village of Drumbo and donations were received from the Drumbo Women's Institute.

In 1934 the collection consisted of 5,193 books and the circulation was 3,993. The library changed its location several times, from Dr. Mitchell's drug store to the home of Henry Burgess, George Law's store, the school, the fire-hall and to Miss Turner's drug store.

In 1937 books were borrowed from the travelling library of the Department of Education.

After the fire most of the books were distributed to the village and rural schools, Frontier College and the March of Books in Halifax.

The books in Miss Turner's store were from the Oxford County Library Co-operative. After Miss Turner's retirement, Miss Jessie Cowan housed the library in her home. The contribution of the Cowan family to the library has been of great importance, Miss Margaret Cowan having served as secretary for 33 years.

In 1967, the committee found a building which could be purchased, and with the help of the Oxford County Library the building was purchased and completely renovated. With new floor, ceiling, panelled walls and new lighting and shelving, the library is most attractive. Mrs. Cecil Caldwell and Mrs. Ray Harmer gave much time and effort to this project.

Mrs. Ralph Racknor is now the librarian and the circulation in 1969 was 5,594. The library is open on Tuesday 12.15 - 12.45 and 3.00 - 5.00, Thursday 12.15 - 12.45 and Friday 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. and Saturday, 10.00 - 11.30 a.m.

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EAST OXFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The East Oxford Public Library had its beginning as a Branch of the Oxford County Library system. The former Oxford Centre School was renovated and a municipal office and Council room was located in one half of the building, and shelves and other equipment were installed to form a spacious library in the other half.

The library was officially opened as a Centennial project in June, 1967 with Mr. G. Gracey of Curries, Chairman of the newly elected East Oxford Library Committee performing the opening ceremony assisted by the librarian, Mrs. John Yeoman. Among those present were Mrs. S. L. Krompart and Mr. L. K. Cole of the County Library.

In the two and one-half years of operation, membership stands at 243 and the circulation averages 200 books per week. The community feels the library has been a

source of pleasure and information.

The library is open on Thursday, 3.00 - 5.00 and 7.00 - 9.00 p.m., and on Saturday, 1.30 - 4.00.

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EMBRO PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Embro Public Library had its beginning as a Mechanic's Institute in 1882. It was housed in a small brick building near a store owned by Mrs. J. C. McIntosh. It was moved to another building, on the site of Mr. Mooney's house and then to the Legion Hall. In 1893 a Town Hall was built and the library is still in this municipal building. Captain Gordon and Mr. E. J. Cody were the early librarians.

The library became a member of the Oxford County Library Association in 1937 and became a branch of the Oxford County Library in 1965. Recently new shelving, furniture, curtains and floor covering has made it an attractive library.

Mrs. R. J. Sutherland, as librarian and later as a member of the Embro Library Board and Committee has contributed a great deal to the success of the library throughout the years.

Mrs. Myrtle McCorquodale is the present librarian and the circulation in 1969 was 7,500. The library is open Tuesdays and Fridays, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. and on Saturday, 2.00 - 4.00.

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HARRINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Harrington Public Library was organized by members of the community in 1906. The late Dr. T. McDougall and the late William Darling were two of the prominent members of the Board. Concerts and dances were held in the Hall to raise money for the project.

The first location was at the home of Miss Margaret McLeod, who acted as librarian. At Miss McLeod's death the library was moved to its present location, the home of Mrs. Alma Kittner.

The library is now a deposit station of the Oxford County Library. In 1969 the book circulation was 1,810.

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HICKSON PUBLIC LIBRARY

A small library connected with the Epworth League of the church was the first library in Hickson. The need for a library became the concern of several citizens who met in their homes to discuss the project. Among them were Mrs. James McKay, Mrs. E. Parker, Ralph Pearson, Emmerson Graves, Gordon Murray and the Rev. J. E. Jones.

In August of 1930 the library was opened in a room behind Mr. J. McColl's barber-shop. Furnishings were donated by interested citizens and Mr. Steven Irwin made the book shelves, some of which are still in use. The members of the library board donated many cords of wood for the stove over the years.

The annual grants from the Provincial Government, Oxford County, East Zorra Township, the Milk Board and Women's Institute helped to finance the library. Funds were also raised by euchre parties, plays, paper salvage drives and other means.

School children have always used the library. The library opened at noon to accomodate them and sometimes teachers brought classes of students.

In 1945 when more space was required the members opened an adjacent room and on a cold winter day the board members assembled to paint and paper the room finding it difficult to make the paper stick on the cold walls.

In 1936 the library joined the Oxford County Library Association and boxes of books were traded among the libraries to supplement the book stock. The Association became the Oxford County Library Co-operative in 1949 and bookmobile service was started.

In 1957 the township hall was purchased for \$250. There is a unique deed for the property. The Lovey's Estate owned the property on which the building was situated and it was leased to the library for 99 years at \$1.00 per year.

Once again the Library Board members and other friends helped to renovate the building as well as to assist with a canvass to raise the funds.

In 1965 the Hickson Library became a branch of the Oxford County Library.

A great deal of credit should be given to the board members and librarians who donated their time and talent in developing library service through the years.

Mrs. Flossie Pullen is the present librarian. The circulation of books in 1969 was 6,357. The library is open on Wednesday, 2.30 - 5.00 and 7.00 to 9.00 p.m. and on Saturday, 2.30 - 5.00.

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INGERSOLL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Ingersoll Library had its beginning as a Mechanic's Institute, prior to 1872. This was wiped out in the Great Fire.

In 1880 a public meeting was held in the Council Chambers and another library began. Mr. James Noxon was elected president. A grant of \$400 was received from the province on the understanding that they would provide a public library, reading room, evening classes and a scientific museum. The municipality contributed some funds and subscribers paid \$1.00 per annum.

Rooms were secured at a rental of \$50.00 and the librarian, Mr. Adkins was paid \$50.00 a year.

The struggles of the committee over the next few years to keep the venture going are recorded in the minutes. To raise funds the committee sponsored concerts and excursions. A trip to Toronto on Civic Holiday, 1882, brought a profit of \$70; a concert by the Jubilee Singers, \$30; but a concert of local talent brought a loss of \$3.99.

In 1880 under the chairmanship of G. W. McDiarmid, the board bowed to the request of the W.C.T.U. to set up a free reading room and recreation room and even entertained the thought of a gymnasium. A piano was installed and rules drawn up for its use. The amusement committee purchased 3 sets of checkers, 2 of "pig in clover", 1 of dominoes, 1 of authors, one "go bang", 1 parlour croquet and board, 1 air gun, etc.

In 1890 the Mechanics Institute became a Free Public Library. The Municipality contributed \$454 to this venture. Several pages of minutes were filled with regulations as to the use of the library.

In 1898 the library was located in the Royal Bank Building and in 1899 moved to the Miller building on Thames Street. A crisis over fuel in 1903 resulted in closing the reading room part of the week and in 1907 the library was closed on account of small pox.

The Library Board applied for a Carnegie grant and in 1910 the present library building on Charles Street was opened.

Mrs. Court was the librarian for 15 years followed by Miss Janet McKellar in 1908. Miss Irene Cole of Guelph succeeded her in 1931 and Miss Betty Crawford followed Miss Cole.

In 1967 Ingersoll Public Library completed major changes in a renovation programme sparked by the Centennial activity. The interior of the library was opened out into a single floor space and areas for reading or reference. The colour scheme is of white and light "Celery" walls with a soft green carpet and drapes, comfortable chairs in tangerines, yellow and red make spots of colour. Mrs. Ross Kilgour, S. Underwood, Dr. J. A. Paterson and Miss Madeleine Hamilton were the board members at this time.

In 1960 under the chairmanship of Percy J. Smith, a children's library was established in the basement.

Library resources have increased with the expansion of the Oxford County Library system and the Lake Erie Regional system.

In 1969 the Library became a branch of the Oxford County Library.

The circulation has risen to well over 60,000 books. The library continues to provide a place for meetings of the Sketch Club and the Book Club. Before the basement was used as a Children's Library, it was the home of such groups as the Photography Club, Naturalists, Little Theatre and many others.

For a number of years travelling exhibitions of art were hung in the library and several times a year, exhibitions of local art are displayed.

The library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 1.00 to 6.00 and 7.00 to 8.30, and on Saturday from 10.00 to 12.00 a.m. and 1.00 to 6.00 p.m.

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INNERKIP PUBLIC LIBRARY

A group of Innerkip residents met with members of the Oxford County Library Board to promote a local branch library. Among those present were Mr. Roy Murray, Mr. John Beckett and Mrs. Harry Carter.

It was decided to rent a room and the Innerkip group assumed the task of preparing it for use as a library. The County Library stocked it with books and a formal opening took place on March 31, 1965.

Mrs. Walter Ross was the librarian until 1968, at which time Mrs. William Elliott became the librarian.

The library has outgrown its location, and it is hoped the library will find a new home.

The circulation in 1969 was 4,078. The library is open on Wednesdays, 3.00 - 5.00, and Fridays, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m.

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KINTORE PUBLIC LIBRARY

On reading the minutes of the Kintore Public Library, one is impressed with the fine community spirit which led to the success of the library through the years. In 1895 a meeting was held to organize a library and Miss A. Furze became the first chairman. In 1896 Mr. E. J. Pearson was appointed as the librarian at a salary of \$12.00 per year.

The report of 1898 shows the number of volumes in the library to be 453 and the circulation of these amounted to 920. 1901 saw the first municipal grant of \$20.00.

In 1909 the library moved to the home of Miss Chalmers who became the librarian.

The duties of the library board were not limited to passing motions. At the meetings of the board the new books were classified and marked and ideas explored for raising funds. Concerts and plays were a source of revenue and perhaps one of the most original was the sale of jack rabbits. The Kintore Hunt Club after donating \$25 offered to give the library the rabbits to dispose of. The library contracted with a man to sell the rabbits at 13¢ a piece and the money increased the library funds.

The Board also sent members to the meetings of the Ontario Library Association. In 1929 the library was transferred to the home of Mr. Harry Haynes, who has served the library faithfully through the years.

In 1936 the library became a member of the Oxford County Library Association.

1938 was an interesting year with a visit of Mr. Angus Howat, from the Library Branch of the Department of Education. Mr. Howat spoke very highly of the library and gave them a special grant because of their efficiency.

In 1949 the Oxford County Library Co-operative was formed and in 1965 the Kintore Library became a branch of the Oxford County Library.

Special tribute should be paid to Mr. A. F. Thornton who acted as secretary for thirty-two years and Mrs. Paynes who has looked after the library in her home for forty years.

The circulation in 1969 was 5,942. At the time of writing this, Mrs. Paynes after 41 years of service is retiring because of ill health. Arrangements for a new location are now underway.

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MOUNT ELGIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Mount Elgin Women's Institute donated \$200 toward establishing a community library in January, 1927. A membership canvass of the area provided additional funds. Mrs. Leslie Woodman of Tillsonburg is the only remaining member of the first board.

A room in the village was rented from the Royal Bank where it remained until July, 1947 when it moved into the Community Hall and it is still located there.

The library was open 5½ hours each week with a membership fee of \$1.00 per year for the first member of a family and 50¢ for each additional member of the same family.

In 1936 the Board voted to join the Oxford County Library Association and boxes of books were exchanged with other members of the Association.

In 1949 the Oxford County Library became a Co-operative and bookmobile service was begun.

Through the years Miss Lerttha Gilbert contributed much as librarian in her twenty-four years of service. Mrs. Kiah Clark served on the Board for twenty years.

Mrs. Donald Fleming is the present librarian and in 1949 the circulation of books was 4,669.

The library is open Thursday, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. and Saturday, 2.00 - 5.00.

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NORWICH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Norwich has had a continuous library service since 1876. In December, 1896 arrangements were made to form a Mechanic's Institute. A room in the "Standard" printing office, which was on the present site of the Norwich Gazette office was chosen for a library and reading room. W. T. Turney was the first president. The Secretary was instructed to draft a declaration signed by the trustees and filed at the Registry office in Woodstock. The subscription rate was \$2.00 per year for a male and \$1.00 for ladies over eighteen years of age. The legislative grant the first year was \$400.00.

The library had several homes - over Pitcher's store, in the Miller block and over Haken's Drug store. When this building was destroyed by fire, the library was located in the Moore block.

In 1913-14 the library was endowed by the Carnegie fund and the present library was built.

In 1936 Norwich became a member of the Oxford County Library Association. In 1953 bookmobile service increased the number of books and in 1965 the library became a branch of the Oxford County Library system.

Some librarians have been G. S. Stanhoff, J. F. Robinson, George Bowman, Miss Pearl Poldon, Miss Amelia Poldon, Mrs. Mary Addison, Miss Mary Foole, Mrs. A. Crabbe and Mrs. V. Longworth.

Miss Louise Lossing is the present librarian. The circulation in 1969 was 21,550. The library is open Mondays and Fridays, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3.00 - 5.00 and 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. and Saturdays, 2.00 - 5.00.

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OTTERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

At a meeting held in the Village Hall at Otterville on March 3rd, 1897, Mr. Robert Paxton presented a list of 103 subscribers plus \$51.52 as a declaration of intent to establish a library to be known as the Otterville Public Library incorporated under the Public Library Act of 1895. A board of management was elected with power to appoint such committees as was deemed necessary.

On March 13, 1897 the library was located in the store of J. W. Fish with Miss Winnie Snyder as the librarian at a salary of \$15 per year. Membership in the library was 50¢ a year and books could be borrowed on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Due to a revision of the Public Library Act in 1898 a Public Library Board was appointed.

In 1899, South Norwich Council authorized a levy of $\frac{1}{4}$ mill and in 1903 $\frac{3}{8}$ mill for library purposes.

During 1927 the Women's Institute suggested building a new library and offered a donation of \$200 toward the project. They led a drive to raise money but were unable to raise enough funds and the crash of 1929 eliminated the project.

The library moved into the township clerk's office where it remained until 1939. At this time the Community Hall was renovated and the library was located in the basement next to the township clerk's office, with the township clerk acting as librarian.

In 1949 the Oxford County Library began supplying books.

In 1965 the library became a branch of the Oxford County Library.

In 1966 the room was enlarged, redecorated and all of the old books were removed. The library was reopened on October 1, 1966 with new books, a new librarian, and a new hope for improved library services.

Mr. T. E. Petch is the librarian and in 1969, 4,576 books were circulated. The library is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 3.00 - 5.30 and on Fridays, 7.30 - 9.30 p.m.

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PLATTSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Although the early records of the Plattsville library were destroyed by fire, it is known that it was organized in 1892 and known as the Plattsville Public Library Mechanic's Institute. The Rev. W. H. Johnston, a Presbyterian minister at Chesterfield, was the Chairman of the Board for many years.

Until 1935 the library was housed in different homes in the village. At this time it was in Neilson's store and a disastrous fire destroyed several buildings including the store.

The library reopened in 1936 in Mr. Alex Glendinning's residence and Mr. Glendinning became the librarian. The year also saw the beginning of the Oxford County Library Association. The library paid a \$15 membership fee and received 150 books which were changed four times a year.

In 1945 the library moved to Hunc's store.

A new fire hall was built in 1949 and the library board persuaded the village trustees to build a second story to house the library.

A month course in librarianship was offered at this time and Mrs. William Bell took this course and became the librarian. When the new quarters were opened in 1949, leaflets were sent to several hundred homes and many attended the opening. Flowers and pictures by local artists added to the attractiveness of the library and refreshments were served.

The library continued to increase in membership and circulation.

In 1965 the library became a branch of the Oxford County Library and the local librarian states that this has proved very beneficial.

Mrs. Bell is the present librarian. The circulation in 1969 was 7,865. The library is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7.30 - 9.30p.m. and on Saturdays from 3.00 - 5.30.

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PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

In 1898 a group of interested citizens started a library in the village of Princeton, to be under the direction of a Board of Management.

The books were kept in the Post Office and Mr. Robert Galbraith, the postmaster, acted as librarian for a salary of \$1.00 per month.

Later the books were moved to a small building on Railway Street owned by Mr. Pronger, and his daughter Hilda became librarian. Mr. Thomas E. Starr was the next librarian.

Following World War I, the community built a rug brick building on Victoria street to be known as The Soldiers Memorial Library. Two bronze plaques in the library bear the names of those who served in the 1914-1918 and the 1939-1945 wars.

In 1921 the books were moved to the new library and Mrs. A. S. Wells became the librarian and she accomplished a great deal in improving library service in the 25 years she was the librarian.

When the Oxford County Library Association was formed in 1936 Princeton library became a member, thus making more books available to the library patrons.

Over the years the library was financed through membership fees, donations, rental fees from organizations using the building, teas, lectures, and grants from the Township and County Councils.

Bookmobile service began when the Oxford County Library Co-operative was formed and in 1965 the library became a branch of the Oxford County Library.

As a branch of the Oxford County Library the service to the people has increased with many more books available and new equipment added.

Mrs. Charles Milton and Mrs. Cecil Beacham followed Mrs. Wells as librarians. Mrs. Charles Gurney is the present librarian. The circulation in 1969 was 8,268. The library is open on Wednesday afternoon from 12.00 to 5.00 and in the evening, from 7.00 to 9.00. It is also open on Saturday from 3.00 to 5.00.

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TAVISTOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Tavistock Public Library had its beginning as a member of the Mechanic's Institute.

An interesting feature about the Tavistock Library is the fact that even in its earliest days it was possible to borrow books every day. As early as 1897 there was a notice in the Tavistock Gazette which reads:

"The Reading Room of the Tavistock Public Library will be open daily from 2.00 to 5.00 p.m. and from 7.00 - 9.00 p.m., upstairs in V. Stock's new block." Miss Carrie McTavish was the librarian and membership tickets were 75¢ per year.

The same year Dr. Steele appeared before Council for aid to the public library. A grant was voted "equal to what East Zorra may give, but not to exceed \$15."

In 1902 the library had moved to new quarters over the Post Office.

1903 saw the Library Board looking longingly at the Carnegie library fund for one stated: "Andrew Carnegie goes on offering libraries to towns in Canada. In some cases the offers are accepted and in some cases not. In case of a refusal we wonder if the library-giver feels somewhat sat on. It is more than likely that Carnegie knows only of the offers that are accepted, his secretary doing the offering."

The Carnegie fund finally reached Tavistock and in 1916 the corner stone was laid for the new library which was described as being "one of the most modern of its kind to be found in many places much larger than Tavistock." It boasted not only a large library room with two attractive fire-places on the main floor, but also a ground floor with an assembly hall, a board room, vault and other accessories.

Librarians serving throughout the years have included Miss Annie Schwalm, Miss Frieda Berklinger, Miss Lenore Bauer and Mrs. Emerson Kalbfleisch, who took a short course in library science and contributed much to the growth of library service.

The book collection has been a large one and was unique in its collection of German books which were purchased because of the German-Canadians in the community.

More books were available when the library joined the Oxford County Library Co-operative, and when the Oxford County Public Library system came into being in 1965, Tavistock became one of its branches.

Mrs. Harold Schwartzenruber is the present librarian. The circulation in 1969 was 7,493. The library is open Monday, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday and Saturday, 3.00 - 5.00 and 7.00 - 9.00; Friday, 3.00 - 5.00.

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THAMESFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Thamesford Public Library had its beginning as a branch of the Sons of Temperance Lodge which was organized in 1851. This formed the nucleus of the Mechanic's Institute, later reorganized as a Public Library. Dr. McWilliam donated a room in his drug store.

Minutes of 1902 record a membership of 131. Several papers and periodicals were subscribed for and members could secure the key and use the reading room for two hours, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and three hours on Friday. Later this privilege was discontinued because it was abused. The librarians salary at this time was \$35 a year.

There was a continuous struggle to raise money, and garden parties, box socials, plays and lectures all contributed. University Extension lectures from the University of Western Ontario were held, some of the speakers including Dr. Solandt, Dr. Kingston, Dean Fox, Mr. W. E. Saunders, and Professor Spencely. At an "At Home" in 1917 a musical programme was furnished by a Mr. Moulton of Ingersoll on his "New Edison".

Provincial Library Association meetings were attended, and on one occasion a fine was to be levied on libraries not sending delegates. Mr. Carson, Inspector of Libraries, discussing book purchasing, mentioned the Thamesford Library as one of the eight that selected books wisely.

At one convention a speaker from Chicago condemned moving pictures, claiming that "attendance at these fostered the fatal habit of hurrying to find out the end of the story instead of thinking along with the author".

Another interesting item of the minutes in 1907 gave the Reading Circle the use of the library on Friday nights "provided they supply their own fuel and light and that the sum of \$3 be accepted from the Reading Circle for loss sustained through subscribers being unable to do business while the meeting was in progress".

The Women's Institute rented the room at a yearly rental of \$5.00.

On March 29, 1933 the I.O.O.F. building where the library was housed was burned. The loss to the library was about \$2,000 and the insurance amounted to \$500. Dr. Weir offered the use of a room in a drug store and shelves, books and an encyclopaedia were donated to start again.

The Library Board thought a new building should be erected. The Village Council consented to contribute \$600, provided signatures of half the village tax payers could be secured. Board members secured this list and then canvassed organizations, lodges, business men and individuals, securing a total of \$1,828.96. After the building was paid for a balance of \$216 was left. Mr. and Mrs. J. M. McKay donated the site and Mr. Ernest Patterson was the builder. Volunteer labour helped to keep the expenses down and shelving, books and furnishings were donated by friends. The library was ready for use in December 1934.

In 1936 a motion to arrange a Book Review Club is recorded. This Club is still in existence. The travelling library from Toronto was used occasionally.

In 1936 the Oxford County Library Association was formed and a delegate from Thamesford attended the meeting in Woodstock with authority to take part, with a contribution of \$50.

In 1947 Miss A. Mackay with eleven other members of the County Association attended a short course in London, receiving a Class E. certificate.

1960 was the year in which the Library became a free public library by the passing of the necessary by-laws. Additional funds made it possible to install a furnace and washroom. In this year, too, Mr. McKay gave the library an extra forty feet of land for future use in enlarging the building. In 1966 the property was turned over to the Township of North Oxford to be held in trusteeship for the Village of Thamesford.

In 1949 the Oxford County Library Association became the Oxford County Library Co-operative and quarterly visits of the bookmobile increased the supply of books.

In 1965 the library became a branch of the Oxford County Library. The library book stock has been weeded and classified and some new shelves and furniture has been added.

Miss Annabel Mackay is in charge of the library which is open Tuesday and Thursdays from 3.00 - 5.30 and 7.00 - 9.00, Friday 6.30 - 9.00 p.m. and Saturday, from 2.00 - 5.30. The circulation in 1969 was 13,511.

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