HUNDREDS SEE NEW LIBRARY AT OPENING

(Continued from Page 1.)

are in Birmingham, was spoken of in high terms.

Stresses Importance

The important place a library occupies in the cultural life of a community was stressed by the Rev. Edgar Dewitt Jones, pastor of the Church of the Deciples, of Detroit, who made the main address of the afternoon. The Rev. Jones complimented the village on attaining the building and declared he believed it unsurpassed in any community the size of Birmingham in the state.

Constructed at a cost of $175,000 and following the English type of architecture, the building will blend with the general plan of the civic center, it is planned. It occupies a square block, and faces Martin street. Its equipment and design are said to be the most modern.

Keys to the new building were presented to Mrs. Retta Barr, president of the library board, by Frank Eurich, Jr., of the firm Burrowes and Eurich, Detroit architects, who designed the building.

In making the presentation, Mr. Eurich said he believed the vision of the library board in planning for the future will be fully appreciated for many generations. The building is planned to accommodate a city four times the size of this Birmingham and it has a stack capacity of 40,000 volumes.

"Costs of construction were held down as far as possible," he said, and the limit of $175,000 was not exceeded."

Thanking those with whom he worked, he declared the co-operation the architects received was of the highest. John Morrison and N. A. Starr, general contractors, Fred Douglas and Wesley E. Forbes were asked to stand and be introduced to the audience. All played a large part in the construction of the library, started in April.

Accepts Keys

"I believe our work is done and that the library will be a positive force for good in the community," Mr. Eurich said.

Mrs. Barr accepted the keys in the name of the people of Birmingham and declared the library board was grateful to those who pioneered in library work here and paved the way for this new building. She said the same spirit prevailed in the village today, relative to the library that prevailed when the start was made 34 years ago.

"The new library is another step in the progress of Birmingham," said B. T. Ellerby, village president. He praised the work of the school, the churches of the village and said the library was among them in its place of distinction.

"We people of Birmingham will be better people because of this institution," he said.

Mrs. Nancy B. Thomas, librarian, spoke briefly on the duties of the librarian. She declared the service in the new library would be on a par with the building itself.

Clarence Vliet, superintendent of schools, presided at the ceremonies. Invocation was pronounced by the Rev. David Leon Woodward, pastor of the First Baptist Church. Roy Parsons sang and Mrs. Madiane Stubbs accompanied him.

The new library is to be open daily from 10 a. m. until 9 p. m. according to announcement by Mrs. Thomas.

The text of the talk made by the Rev. Jones follows:

Rev. Jone's Talk

"This is a memorable day for Birmingham, a day that signifies progress and achievement. There are three public buildings generally recognized as community assets. They are, the church, the school, and the library. The school is a symbol of light and liberty. In this country the public school is a pillar of that republic. The church is a reminder that man cannot live by bread alone: Old Dr. Samuel Johnson had a habit of raising his hat every time he passed a church edifice. Perhaps he was extreme in that but better this than the other extreme. The library is a sign of culture, a token of the community's growth in liberal education. The library goes arm in arm with the school and the church, and the three together help to establish and maintain that most primary of all institutions, the home.

"How wonderful the world of books! Thomas Carlyle said that the true university is a collection of books. John Milton held that books are not absolutely dead things, but that a good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured on on purpose to a life beyond life. Over the famous library at Alexandria was this notable inscription, 'The medicine of the mind.' Bacon said, 'Reading makes a full man.' Great books as life Teachers are justly acclaimed. The possibilities of a library are beyond computation when it is remembered that youth pours over the pages and dreams his great dream amid such companionship.

"This library will contain biography, fiction, poetry, history and that enchanting kind of writing known as belles-letters. What a charm there is in biography. 'Every human life is a volume worthy to be studied,' said an old worthy. Whether that be true, certainly some lives are eminently worth studying. According to Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, famous English bookman who recently died, the five greatest biographies in the English language are, Boswell's Life of Johnson, Lockhart's Life of Scott, Mrs. Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Bronte, Trevelyn's Life of Macaulay, and John Morley's life of Gladstone. Our age is partial to biography, for which we may be grateful.

"There will be poetry in this library. What a magic world the poets inhabit. Poetry stimulates the imagination, interprets life and nature, Cultivates a love of poetry and the earth, the heavens; mountain and valley, river and lake, taking on a new beauty. Whatever else's vocation, familiarity with the poets amplifies and enriches the mind and the heart. When I am weary in mind and body, nothing so refreshes and invigorates me as companionship with the poets. Not so long ago I picked up a volume of British lyrics, made the acquaintance of a half dozen new poets and was transported into the seventh heaven, through the wonder and charm of their verses.

Praises Books

"There is the moving picture of fiction, full of life and color, grave and gay, the novels of mere entertainment, the novels of revolt. Nearly every nation has its masters of fiction. The Russian school is soaked in sadness thereby reflecting the sufferings of the people. There are the old masters like Hugo, Dickens, Thackery, and the newer writers such as Bennett, Galsworty, Walpole, and Deeping. There is the fascinating group of contemporary American fictionists, but Jane Austen still lives and Mark Twain continues to captivate the millions. It is almost an endless subject, this one of books. This library will contain the best of the essays and those heavier works of philosophy and science. History will be represented here and the story of how nations were born lived suffered and died will be read by great hosts of men, women and even children.

"Books are the best companions, because they never intrude themselves upon us. They make no approaches to us. They await our approach to them. When we weary of them we can shut up which is something we cannot always do successfully with the human beings. We can find a book for every mood and when we have had enough we can say "The shelf for you until tomorrow or some other time." And that's the end of it. A community's investment in a public library is bound to pay big dividends, not in money, but in morals, in aspirations, in dreams, and in actualities.

"Abraham Lincoln's life was profoundly affected by the library he preserved, as a boy and young man. His library was small but representative. There was biography, Weems' Life of Washington, a book belittled now by the most of us, certainly not an ideal biography, but it stirred the heart of the young Illinoisan and enabled him to dream great dreams. Poetry? Yes, the poetry of Robert Burns and of Shakespeare. And he loved Oliver Wendell Holmes. For fiction he had Robinson Crueso, Pilgrim's Progress, and that prince of story tellers old Aesop. Yes, and the King James Version of the English Bible was in the Lincoln library, and that is a literature of itself. History, biography, correspondence, drama, poetry, proverbs—they are all there. Thus pouring over these books Lincoln dreamed and out of his dream came his mighty ministry to the world.

"Birmingham builds for eternity when it builds a library. 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,' said the greatest of religious teachers. May the citizens of this village resort here in increasing numbers, the young, the middle aged and the old, to be counseled, inspired and comforted by the great teachers they will find here, teachers to whom multitudes have turned and so were buildded up in those things that matter most."

Library History

The first library in Birmingham, consisting of 48 books, was in the home of Mrs. Edwin Baldwin. It had been started by 19 men and women who had belonged to a disbanded Good Templar lodge. They voted Nov. 1, 1869 to put their share of the money in the lodge treasury into a book fund to start a small library. At their first annual meeting their membership had increased to 38 and they had paid $68.47 into the treasury. It was this money that was used to buy the first 48 books.

The library had its second residence in the home of Mrs. John Baldwin who kept it until 1875. At that time it moved into its first on Merrill street. The library at this time was in charge of volunteer librarians who gave out the books on Saturday afternoons. The organization soon became known as the Ladies' Library Society. These women washed, painted, and scrubbed the old church and then devoted their time to securing money to increase the number of books. The building was paid for and the library was supported by parties, socials, fairs, minstrel shows, plays, baby shows, lawn parties and dances which were held in the library building.

The brick building at Maple and Woodward avenues was secured through the efforts of these women. They sold bricks for the building and persuaded other public spirited citizens to purchase chairs. The books were kept in one room of the building and the other rooms were rented or used for library benefits. Mrs. Kate Alger, the first librarian, kept the library open every Saturday afternoon from 2 to 5 p. m. and from 7 to 8. There were then 1820 books.

Land to Village

In 1907 the Ladies' Library Society turned over the propery to the village to be supported by a half mill tax. After the deed was given to the village with the proviso that a library was to be maintained in the building, the villages offices were to have their quarters there also, and the triangular space in front was always to be used as a park space. The property was to be forfeited to the University of Michigan for library purposes if the terms of the deed were not carried out.

Miss Daisy Durkee was the first librarian under the new board. The library was kept open three afternoons a week from 3 until 8.

For many years the library board made the rules and the policy, but as trained librarians were engaged this was turned over to them.

The village commission and the library board petitioned the court of chancery in 1925 to set aside the old deed and to give a clear title. The decree was granted in 1926. The village was given a clear title except for the agreement that the block of land bounded by Bates Chester, Martin and Merrill streets, was to be used. In July 1926 a bond was issued for $175,000 and Burrowes and Eurich, architects, of Detroit were given the contract for the new building.

Announcement was made of the presentation of a beautiful marble and bronze clock to the library by Miss Jennie Keys, the only surviving member of the original library group. Large andirons were presented by Elmer C. Huston.

LAST RITES HELD FOR MRS. WOOD

(Continued from Page 1.)

O. She leaves three sons, George wood of Birmingham, Harry Wood of Detroit and Thomas Wood of Los Angeles, Cal. Two daughters survive, Mrs. McBride of Birmingham, wife of a village commissioner, and Mrs. O. Dailey of Bryan, O.

Two sisters, Mrs. Anette McCumcey and Mrs. Belle Smith of Fort Wayne, Ind., also survive.

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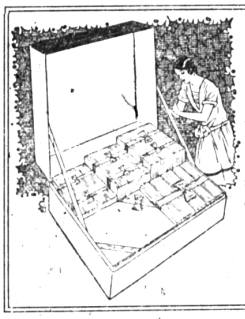

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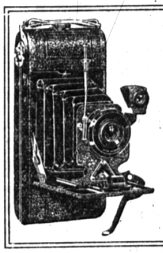

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