

The Baldwin Librarian

Supplement to The Birmingham Eclectic. Thursday, December 16, 1937

PUBLIC INVITED TO OPEN HOUSE

Baldwin Library Will Observe Its Tenth Anniversary

By MARY H. LAMBIE
President of the Board

The Baldwin Public Library invites you to visit the beautiful building we have occupied for the past ten years. In one sense this is a birthday party to which all of the people of Birmingham are cordially asked to come, for it was in December 1927 that the library was moved from its old location at Maple and Woodward Avenues to the handsome new structure, part of the planned Civic Center of Birmingham.

During these ten years we have learned to appreciate more and more the architecture and construction of our library building, as well as the equipment, planned not only for the present but for the future growth of the city. And we would like to have all of you come and share our celebration, join with us in the first festivities of the holiday season, when we hold Open House for three days, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, December 16, 17, and 18, 1937.

The Library Board in giving a brief account of its stewardship would like to report these improvements they have been able to make in the past year: cleaning the walls, providing new curtains and draperies, a fine new catalogue case, shelving, a case for exhibits, besides a number of small repairs. Most important of all is the great increase in the number of books on the shelves. When the books were moved into the new building ten years ago, their number was approximately 6600. By the end of 1936 there were 9951 volumes. Gradually these were increased to about 13,000. Then for several years

UNIQUE EXHIBITS SHOWN IN CASE

Many Collectors Offer To Display Variety Of Treasures

A museum case which has aroused a great deal of interest among library patrons is located in a prominent position just inside the front doors and opposite the main desk.

Many unusual exhibits have already been shown but the possibilities as a small museum are still to be exploited. The collection of moths, butterflies and bugs loaned by Robert Howland and Mrs. Ned Long, attracted much attention, especially among other collectors. Mr. Paul McPharlin, author of several books on puppetry, loaned the sheets showing the steps in the making of his latest publication, IN OLD KENTUCKY, an old melodrama by C. T. Dazey. Small models of famous locomotives, loaned by Barum School, interested children as well as adults in railroad transportation.

During the summer many rare items were loaned by John P. Schuch of Saginaw—rare books, manuscripts, old glass, snuff boxes and fans, all of them collectors' items.

In addition to the table case, there are four wall cases, specially lighted, which are used for a variety of exhibits. A painting by Paul Honork, loaned by Miss Mary Adkins, has occupied one case during the summer. Many projects made by children in the schools have been shown in these cases and on the bulletin boards surrounding the room. The present projects were selected from those prepared in the schools for Book Week.



BALDWIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

CHILDREN FLOCK TO STORY HOUR

Young Listeners Ask For Their Many Favorite Fairy Tales

The eager boys and girls who gather in front of the public library every Saturday morning before the doors are opened, prove that story telling is not yet out of fashion.

In these days of mechanical and scientific wonders it is not surprising that the children receive the most marvelous tales of magic very calmly. They meet with so many unexplained things in their daily life, they hardly need fairy stories to stimulate their imaginations.

The ancient folk tales, which have been told and retold and handed down by word of mouth have become so well trimmed and polished that by the time they are written up in book form they are very well adapted for story telling.

These tales have many values. They introduce new situations and plausible types of people—the giant who had no heart in his body, the princess whom nobody could silence, the jolly tailor who became king. Even Sleeping Beauty becomes a reality to the children who have heard newspaper accounts of people sleeping for long periods of time.

Some stories are told each year by request. The old folk and fairy tales that the children know are among the most popular. They like princesses, giants, animals who speak with human tongues, and brave boys who become princes by virtue of their clever wits and kind hearts.

They demand funny stories to amuse them, and ones to arouse their sympathy, tales of physical daring and spiritual courage to inspire and thrill them. And they respond with smiles to the picturesque and rhythmic language in which many of the stories are told.

In the 6th century, St. Benedict laid down the ruling that each monk in his monastery must have a book from the library and "read it straight through."

Library No Longer Place For Housing Rich Man's Books But Institution For All

When Jonathan Swift was considering the writing of "The Battle of the Books" he wrangled himself a job in a library because in the eighteenth century such a position was one to be envied. A small income offered security of a sort and there was little work to do leaving him plenty of time for his book. The library looked after itself—no one ever came into it anyway.

The worthy Dean would have fied in confusion had he been confronted with a modern library patron in pursuit of knowledge. For as libraries have grown and expanded, so have the demands upon them increased. No longer is a library a place for a rich man's store of books; it is a modern institution.

The Birmingham library is a modern library in every sense of the word, for as no institution may exist without people, so no library may consider itself strictly "modern" or "up-to-date" if the people who use it have not these characteristics.

Men and women who use the Birmingham library know what they want and ask for it intelligently. A typical day in the library may include requests for everything from directions for tree-grafting to a recipe for plum pudding.

Spring Prompts Garden Urges "Reference questions" as they are called, cover an amazing variety of subjects. With the first hint of Spring, enthusiastic gardeners may be found before the shelves laden with books on bulbs, perennials, landscaping and kindred subjects. Spring, too, brings out the urge to "let's do something about the house this year" and the homemaker hies them to the library for books on interior decoration, period furniture and the like.

Perhaps the man of the house likes to get out into the wilds, or whip a fast stream for trout; perhaps he is a golf addict or serious about his bridge game. Where to go, what equipment he

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Library, Police And Fire Departments Shared Quarters In 'Good Old Days'

By J. B. Howarth

The story of the present attractive library building of our city known as the Baldwin Public Library goes back to 1924 when our community was an incorporated village under the city management plan. There was a commission of three men, Charles J. Shain, who was born in this locality, being village president, the others, S. O. Wylie Bell and David H. Ladd, well known citizens.

The village offices were housed in an old time brick building at the southeast corner of Woodward and Maple Avenues. Here, besides the village offices, were the police and fire departments, and on the second floor the Baldwin Public Library, which was the outcome of an organization

known as the Birmingham Library Association, sometimes known as the Ladies Library Association. This building was originally owned by this Association mainly through the generosity of Miss Martha Baldwin, for many years a resident of Birmingham who was intensely interested in the village and who was in many ways responsible for the reputation it has always maintained as an attractive community of homes.

It is shown by the county records that on January 18, 1907, the Birmingham Library Association decided to the village the above described building with the provision that a free public library should be maintained by the village and in event of failing to make proper provision for its maintenance the village was bound to Quit Claim the property to the Board of Regents of the University of Michigan for maintenance of a public library.

Late in 1923 or early in 1924 the three forward-looking men who comprised the village commission, realizing that adequate provision must soon be made for more commodious quarters for housing the city's public facilities, acquired for municipal purposes the block bounded by Martin, Merritt, Chester and the Streets, just east of the building then known as the Hill School, now used as headquarters for the Board of Education, this block being presumed by many to be needed for site of a new city hall.

In April of 1924 the village authorities considered selling the old Municipal Building and

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SURVEY TELLS STORY OF PAST

Figures Show Changes In Fortunes Of Baldwin Public Library

By ADELINE COOKE Librarian

A survey of the ten years just past shows that the fortunes of the library followed the trend of fortunes in general during the depression. From the 19th of December, 1927, when the new library was opened for business, until 1932 the library enjoyed prosperity.

There was a full staff of 6 members under the direction of Mrs. Nancy Thomas, librarian, there were 3 school branches and the main library was open 66 hours a week. The expenditures and receipts ran about \$15,000 a year until 1930 when they began to drop off as the tax collections dwindled, and 1932 saw a low level of \$6,000.

The great 60% increase in the circulation of books was at first due to the popularity of the library and its very adequate service and then, as in all other libraries in the country, it was due to a distressed population, coming for emergency information or for escape from their troubles. This increased use of the books with less money for replacements sadly depleted the book stock and the circulation showed the effects of it in a sharp decline.

Funds were so low that the school branches had to be closed (with the exception of Pierce School Library which was kept open by the Present Day Club) and the hours of the main library were reduced from 66 to 30 a week; the staff was reduced to the librarian and one assistant, Margaret Hurston, and the library took long vacations without pay.

This was in 1933 but along in 1934 times began to improve and gradually hours, staff and book collection were increased until now there is again a staff of 6 members and the book collection has reached the high point in the history of the library, 17,081. Well over half the people of Birmingham and many from Bloomfield Hills and other nearby communities have library cards and seem to enjoy using them.

PLAN PROVIDES NEWEST FICTION

Rental Shelves Now Offer Up-To-The-Minute Reading

The rental collection, which includes the newest fiction and the lighter non-fiction, is an important feature of the library and can claim a large share of the credit for helping the library over the darkest days of the depression. It has been singularly successful and seems to have the hearty approval of library patrons.

When the blow fell in 1932 and there was scarcely enough money in the library funds to keep the building open and pay one librarian, this plan was evolved. Mrs. Thomas, librarian at that time, and Mrs. Wellman, a member of the Library Board, organized a sort of "Friends of the Library" club which had as an object the collecting of funds to start a rental collection.

When they had secured \$100 through gifts and teas, they invested it in books to be loaned at a rental of ten cents a week with three cents a day for overtime. When the books had paid for themselves they were transferred from the rental to the regular library collection and became the property of the library.

In five years of its existence

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