

HISTORY OF THE WESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Mechanics Institutes.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports that the oldest library in Canada is in Niagara-on-the-Lake, being established in the year 1800. St. Charles comes next in 1802; then Kingston 1832; Galt 1836; Hamilton 1839; Dundas 1841; London 1842 and Ennottville in 1847. Today there are 1,100 libraries in the Dominion. In 1857 the Ontario Government records show 58 libraries known as Mechanics Institutes.

The Mechanics Institute of Weston was active prior to the Confederation of Canada, being incorporated in the year 1858, or February 8th 1858 to be exact. Government files show that these Institutes were sanctioned in 1835, and that in 1858 there were 58 such Institutes in what was then known as Upper Canada. They all received grants from the Government of that day. The Weston Mechanics Institute received in 1858 a grant of \$140.00, and this was the last year in which Government Grants were paid to Mechanics Institutes in Upper Canada. Why these grants were discontinued does not appear, but the presumption is that it was on account of the Institutes being merely circulating libraries, as the returns do not show that any of them provided lectures or conducted evening classes.

In 1864 six Mechanics Institutes were represented on the Board of Arts and Manufactures. Grants to the Board of Manufactures were discontinued in 1868, and in the same year the Board of Arts and Manufactures was abolished.

Confederation took place in 1867 nine years after ~~the~~ ~~Weston~~ Weston had its first Mechanics Institute. In 1868 the Mechanics Institutes were placed under the supervision of the Department of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works, see Agriculture and Arts Act, March 4th 1868. In this year there were only 13 Institutes in the Province of Ontario as against 58 in the year 1858. *Weston was incorporated as a Village in 1882*

Woodbridge appears in the Ontario Government records as being incorporated in 1877. This Institute received a grant in 1878 of \$294.92. It had 65 members, and the Annual fee was \$1.00; apprentices fifty cents, and ladies the same.

The records of the Weston Mechanics Institute from 1858 to 1884 are not available. Mr. W. Cruickshank however states that the library at that date occupied a site upon, or next to, the house in which he now lives, which is 188 Main Street, North. Mr. J. Nason confirms the approximate location, but believes it might be that ~~place~~ which is now known as 190 Main St., North, and is at the present time being used as a store. Mr. Cruickshank remembers that the windows had painted upon them the words Mechanics Institute Library. His father was the first librarian.

In the year 1885 the library was re-organized, and occupied the rooms ~~which~~ now used by the Fire Brigade, and the Hydro Office, facing Little Avenue, in the Town Hall. Books from this library may still be found on the shelves of the present Weston Public Library at King & Main Streets. Books were regularly loaned to members and evening classes conducted.

It is due to the carefully preserved records kept by Mr. Wm Nason, Treasurer for the Mechanics Institute during these early years, that much valuable information is now obtainable.

For the year ending 1884-1885 this Institutes receipts amounted to \$80.85; Expenditures \$53.50; Value of furniture etc. \$40.00. The number of books in the library was 161, and the circulation for the year 150. Compare this circulation with 1931 which was over 79,000, and it will be seen how great has been the development of this library.

In 1887 we find on the Institute Board such well known citizens of the Village of Weston (some of whom have since passed away) as Mr. T. R. Wadsworth, President; Rev. W. Reid, 1st Vice Pres.; Mr. R. S. Brown 2nd Vice Pres.; Mr. W. J. Cruickshank, Corresponding Secretary; Mr. R. Padget, Recording Secretary; Mr. Jacob Bull, Librarian; Mr. J. Fitton, Assistant Librarian, and Mr. Wm Nason, Treasurer. The Committee was composed of Messrs J. Cruickshank; J. Linton; Jos. Nason; R. H. Leighton; E. Shuttleworth; J. Hill; W. Ellerby; Dr. W. J. Charlton; Dr. T. Y. Savage; Mr. R. Dawson and Dr. J. Banks.

In the above we find a considerable body looking after the welfare of, ^{this} what is to us today, ~~this~~ small library. It however speaks volumes for the keen interest in community activities, which must have been present in these early years ~~of~~ the villagers.

Weston readers of this history will perhaps be interested further to learn that the members composing the Evening Class held in Book-keeping, whose teacher was Mr. R. H. Leighton, were Messrs Alfred Barton; Robert Rowntree; John Rowntree; Stephen Hill; Charles Ashman; George Pearson; Jacob Bull; Frank Russell; Wm E. Ellerby; Geo Vandevord; Alex Fraser; and Mercie Coulter; Elizabeth Monkman; Ada Reid; Annie Reid; and W. B. Buckley. The ages ranged from 40 years to 16 years. This class was held in 1888.

Mr. Jos. Nason commenced in 1887 to assist his father Mr. Wm. Nason in carrying on this good work, and the writer of this history is greatly indebted to him for his assistance in making the work possible. His records have been the chief source of information, and when one realises that Mr. Jos. Nason has given over 36 years of service in the Town of Weston's interests on the Library Board he is deserving of the thanks of the citizens of his home town.

While many would be interested to know and read the names of all those worthy citizens connected with the work of developing the library as we have it today, space will not permit, and we regret the fact. We do find however that Mr. L. R. Lemaire was a member of the Board in 1890, and many of us remember the time that the street now known as Fern Avenue used to be called Lemaire, ~~Lemaire~~. This change of name is to be regretted, for ~~it~~ often ~~that~~ only by such means is it possible to perpetuate the memories of worthy citizens. Mrs L. R. Lemaire also acted as librarian in 1898. In these early years the custom was to have an Annual Election of officers and Executive. Today the procedure under the Act is for the Town Council, and the Board of Education to appoint a member for three years to the Library

Board and in the case of the Separate School for two years. So the Board is composed of the Mayor, by virtue of his office, and eight others representing the Board of Education; Separate School, and the Town of Weston. The Chairman is elected from this body, and the Secretary-Treasurer may be appointed either from the same, ~~and~~ *or* from outside of its membership.

Mrs. E. Wadsworth in 1907 donated several books to the library, one or two dating back to 1842.

Miss Florence Sosnowsky was librarian in 1909. The Village grant in the same year was \$60.00, and the Provincial Grant \$68.27. Fees received amounted to \$61.25. It may easily be seen from these figures that Miss Sosnowsky must have given her valuable services for practically nil. Mr. A. J. Barker, our present Postmaster of Weston, was one of the auditors together with Mr. Henry Pearson in 1909.

The present Weston Public Library had its origin in a resolution passed by the Board of 1911, ~~in~~ *requesting* the Carnegie Corporation to grant \$10,000.00 for a Library Building, but it was three years later before this fund became available. It was in May 1911 that the Village Council was approached in reference to this Carnegie Library, and the making of the application for this grant. Weston was not incorporated as a town until 1915.

The above action seems ~~to~~ *to* have received its impetus about 1909 when seriously pressed for funds, for the minutes of the Board shows that a resolution was discussed, but not passed, to hand over the Library ~~xxxxxx~~ to Council due to insufficient funds. A concert was however suggested as an alternative and carried out successfully for it resulted in an addition of \$50.00 being secured for the treasury. Mrs L. R. Lemaire receiving the thanks of the Library Board for her efforts in making this success possible.

an In August 1911 *was* options ~~were~~ obtained on lots for the embryo Carnegie Library. It was also during this year that the York County Public Library Institute met at Weston, and this fact in itself must have aided considerably in ~~encouraging~~ encouraging the earnest endeavors of the Board to procure a suitable library for the growing population of Weston. Still two more years however were to pass before a favorable reply was received from the Andrew Carnegie Fund, and when it was received was well worth waiting ~~as~~ *for* as \$10,000.00 was offered to erect a Free Library for the townspeople *for*.

The plans for the new building were submitted by Mr. Peter Lindsay on February 8, 1913, and a rather amusing, if distressing, circumstance happened when these plans were forwarded to New York for the approval of the Carnegie Fund Corporation. In some manner the Express Company responsible for their return delivery to the Library Board, could not produce them., and the Board gave the company ten days to do so, or forfeit \$50.00 for default. The plans turned up.

On August 25th 1913 a resolution was passed to commence building the new Library in the Spring of 1914. Mr. Geo. Sainsbury received the contract for the building, and Mr. R. McCausland the glazing contract.

Here are some figures which may be of particular interest, as they show the financial conditions, and the circulation of books for 1913. Rent of building (Little Avenue) \$50.00; Lighting \$50.00; Caretaker & Librarian \$150.00; Magazines \$100.00 Books \$300.00; Miscellaneous \$190.00. Total \$900.00. The librarian at this date was Miss Agnes Sosnowsky.

The first meeting in the new library took place in January 1915. The actual date of the dedication of this building does not appear. Many details in this first history will naturally be incomplete, and the writer would request that interested citizens who may be able to supply these deficiencies will pass such information to the Library Board.

Another interesting record is found under date January 11.1915.

Moved that: This Board request the Judge of the County Court of the County of York to appoint Mr. Henry Roberts the caretaker and Janitor, of the Weston Public Library, to be a special Constable, whose special duty it shall be to preserve peace in the rooms of the library, and in the building in which the library is situate, and to prevent the stealing, injury or destroying of the property of the Board, and to apprehend offenders, and he shall have generally all the powers and privileges, and be liable to all the duties and responsibilities which pertain to the office of Constable.

This resolution does not seem to have been renewed annually; so we presume that the members of the library today are obedient observers and co-operators of the Rules & Regulations.

Miss Jessie Rorke became librarian on August 23, 1917. This office she filled in a very capable manner for two years.

During the year 1918 of the Great War there seems to have been much difficulty in procuring coal to heat the building. Mr. A. L. Campbell was delegated the job of finding this elusive fuel, and in the meantime the library had to be closed. This condition however did not continue ~~for~~ long as Mr. Campbell succeeded in obtaining some soft coal suitable for the purpose, and the library was immediately re-opened.

that

The Board on February 7th 1919 authorized Farmers Clubs, of 20 members or over, could become members of the library upon a payment of 75 cents per member, instead of the regular fee of one dollar.

During the above year Mrs A. A. Briggs donated 105 books to the library.

Miss Ruth Rothery, our present librarian, took over her duties October 8th 1919. Between August 1919 and October 1919 Miss Elsie Cousins acted as temporary librarian. The popularity of Miss Rothery as a librarian is unquestioned. Miss Rothery's ability in assisting one and all, adults or children, to obtain books suitable to the individual taste and requirements is one of her most pleasing assets. The children confidently bring all such difficulties and problems to her to solve, ~~especially~~ when they have to prepare for their school examinations.

The Weston Public Library has on several occasions been used for educational purposes. Mr. Jas. Dennis, Chairman of the Board of Education in 1919 requested space for 30 pupils, which the Board granted, and again in 1921 the Separate School Board was granted the same request. This ~~request~~ developed due to the fact that ~~there~~ sufficient room was not obtainable at the various schools. During this time, and since the High School, Separate School, and Memorial School have been built, and still the cry is for more rooms in which to comfortably ~~place~~ *house Weston's* increasing family of children.

Mr. F. H. M. Irwin, whom it may be remembered resided at Rosemount & Queens Drive, before leaving town to reside at Whitby donated a twenty volume set of Disraeli's works to the library.

The following figures covering a period from 1885 to 1931 will be of interest:

YEAR.	RECEIPTS.	EXPENDITURES.	CIRCULATION.	FEES.	NEW MEMBERS.	BOOKS IN LIBRARY.
1885 (M.I.)	80.85	53.50	161	30.00	45	161
1890 "	384.14	378.66	2430	51.00	115	900
1895 "	357.23	366.01	3710	72.75	130	1475
1900 (W.L.)	379.14	374.56	4674	36.25	111	2996
1905 "	303.52	250.64	4736	51.25	127	3428
1910 "	228.76	208.08	4071	67.00	124	3337
1911 "	227.66	208.03	4202	54.25	149	3409
1914 (Free)	1320.69	781.48	8592	free	122	3698
1920 "	1816.08	1791.62	23772	42.10	346	5092
1925 "	3580.83	3552.74	43269	59.95	482	70262
1930 "	4223.08	4276.73	65977	85.90		9716
1931 "	4096.76	4044.83	79160	86.45	327	10268

Mr. A. L. Campbell was Chairman of the Board for 1931. He has given over 20 years of valuable service to the library.

From the foregoing it is amply proven that due to the very able Board and Librarians in charge of the library's interests over the intervening years, Weston has been particularly favoured. The good work of the past is being continued today, and it can be stated with justifiable pride that we have one of the best governed, regulated and up-to-date libraries in the Province of Ontario and probably in Canada.

January 20/32

Henry Loose
SECRETARY-TREASURER.

*7444
2824
10268*

The first named on each committee to be the convener thereof.

In order that each member may be on two committees, we suggest that the membership committee consist of six members, instead of five as limited by a motion carried at last meeting.

DUTIES OF COMMITTEES.

I—It shall be the duty of the Library Committee (a) to purchase the books required for the current year ; (b), to have all books bound, which may require binding ; (c), to attend to all matters regarding the duties of librarian.

II—It shall be the duty of the Reading Room committee (a), to conduct the purchase and sale of all papers and magazines ; (b), to attend to all matters in connection with caretaking, heating and lighting of the Reading Room or Library.

III—It shall be the duty of the membership committee (a), to look after the subscription of members in arrears ; (b) and to canvass for new members.

IV—It shall be the duty of the Finance committee (a), to attend to all matters in connection with ~~grants~~ and rents ; (b), to examine and certify to all accounts before the said accounts are paid.

V—It shall be the duty of the committee on classes and entertainments (a), to report on the feasibility of organizing and conducting classes in connection with the Institute, and to conduct the same if organized ; (b), to attend to all matters in connection with lectures and entertainments held under the auspices of this Institute.

The committees, in all cases to report to the Board before taking final action.

Biography.....	90	Issued..	41
Fiction.....	309	"	2257
History	150	"	74
Miscellaneous.....	229	"	156
General Literature....	33	"	6
Poetry & Drama.....	42	"	38
Religious Literature...	70	"	20
Science and Art.....	124	"	49
Voyages and Travels..	87	"	309
Works of Reference..	47	"	..
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	1190		2950

Purchased during the year 172 volumes ;
balance of cash in hands of treasurer, this
date (4th May), \$16.38.

The following are the receipts and ex-
penditure during the year :—

RECEIPTS.

Balance on hand, 1st May, '90...	\$ 5 48
Members fees	50 15
Legislative Grant, membership...	50 00
" " library.....	150 00
" " reading room..	49 00
Municipal Grant.....	100 00
Amount of sale. periodicals, etc..	6 75
From other sources.....	9 80
	<hr/>
	\$421 18

EXPENDITURE.

Rent, light and heating.....	\$ 87 41
Salaries	65 31
Books (not fiction).....	102 94
Books (fiction).....	24 59
Book binding.....	19 80
Magazines, Newspapers, etc.....	52 60
Miscellaneous.....	52 15
Balance on hand.....	16 38
	<hr/>
	\$421 18

ASSETS.

Value of Furniture, etc.....	\$ 100 00
Value of Books in Library.....	1000 00
Cash on hand.....	16 38
	<hr/>
	\$1,116 38

LIABILITIES.

.....	\$ 00 00
Reading room open to members 6 times each week from 7 to 10 o'clock.	
No. of Daily papers.....	3
No. of Weekly papers.....	7
No. of Magazines.....	4
No. of Periodicals.....	5

This drawer contains
our only old records
of the Weston Library.

The Annual reports
are from 1885 to 1959.

These folders have never
really been sorted - there
are other interesting bits
& pieces.

There is one box in
the corner under the
tea-kettle of the files
which were in the filing
cabinet when York took
over. Much can probably
be discarded. Some has

already been sent to
MAIN. I think the
Annual Reports 1960-1966
are there - unless I sent
them to Main.

Last year Miss Brennan
spent some time on
this History of the library -
~~the~~ re-writing & updating,
but she did not have
it completed when she
left Weston.

The original blueprints are
here also.

P.S.

The plans for the 1962 renovations
are in the cupboard with the Art Material.