

Eau Claire Public Library

1919 Annual Report

To the Board of Directors of the Eau Claire Public Library.

Gentlemen: -

I have the honor to submit to you the annual report of the Eau Claire Public Library for the year ending June 30, 1919.

The work of the year just closed was necessarily interrupted by the epidemic of Spanish Influenza during which the Library was closed for sixty-two days. The stations which had been well started were closed and had to be discontinued for the entire year. While the Library closed to the public the staff was kept busy taking inventory and doing the many things for which time had been lacking. Unfortunately, four members of the staff were effected by the epidemic too.

In response to the call of the A.L.A. for books for the soldiers and sailors in service, the Library collected nearly one thousand volumes during the year in addition to the fifty scrapbooks which were made and donated by the Agenda Club, a young women's organization of Our Savior's Lutheran Church. We feel that Eau Claire has responded generously. Almost without exception, the books were fresh and attractive and just the kind the boys wanted.

Circulation

The circulation statistics, as a result of being closed for sixty-two days and the discontinuation of the stations, have suffered sadly by comparison with previous years. During the time the Library was open, statistics show that greater service was rendered than the year before, but the interruption of all Library activities for sixty-two days has resulted in a loss of 14,451 from the number of books loaned last year. The total circulation for home use during the year was 93,651. Of these 57,608 books were circulated in the adult department and 36,043 in the juvenile department. The adult department suffered most, as the Reading Circle work was pushed hard in the

spring and that almost made up the loss in the juvenile department.

For the 10 months the library was open the circulation at the main library shows a gain of 8,366 though the 62 days of closing for the epidemic brought the annual circulation for the year 14,451 less than that of the preceding year.

Registration

A decreased circulation means also a smaller number of active card holders. Readers' cards expire automatically three years from date of issue. Reregistration takes place every month. Those borrowers whose cards show that they have not been used within a year from date, are dropped. Many of these would include cards of men in the service. With the return of the men in the service and the resumption of peace-time activities, this next year should show a decided growth and progress. New borrowers in the adult department numbered 969 and in the juvenile department, 531, making a total of 1,500 additions. 1,408 cards expired or were withdrawn because borrowers had removed from the city, leaving the total number of cards in force June 30, 1919, 8,684, 335 less than last year.

Accession

The Library added 1,325 volumes during the year. Of these, 1,171 were by purchase, 67 by binding, and 87 by gift. 801 volumes were withdrawn. The total number of books at the end of the year is 26,442.

Among the books purchased are the following:

1st 18 v. of the New American Encyclopedia ready to date

Set of the World Book 8v.
Set of Machine Shop Practice 8v.
Set of Carpentry and Contracting 5v.
Complete set of Turgenieff
Set of Kipling
Adams - Education of Henry Adams

In proportion, more new books were added in the juvenile department than in the adult. The need was so great that after all the children had had, it seemed necessary to spend \$150 to replenish the shelves which were like the proverbial Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard. The set of machine shop books and those on carpentry have given us

actual joy. They have definitely filled the need of more than one anxious patron. We plan to add many books of this nature the coming year and to double our 600 or "Useful Arts" class on which we have rather prided ourselves before. Since the men in service have returned, attention has been called to the books on occupations and civil life. The A.L.A. has co-operated with the government in this effort by sending out a series of book-lists on the various trades and professions. The Library hopes to have all the books which are recommended by the A.L.A.

Our rental collection can be increased to meet the demand for new fiction. Our aim is to keep our rental collection a duplicate collection so it is possible to get a free copy of every title added. By purchasing two rental copies instead of one as formerly, we can supply the demand for new books better. On July 1, 1919, there were 141 rental books in circulation. During the year there had been 236, but 95 of them paid for themselves and were made free copies in the regular collection.

The number of pictures and stereopticon views which were loaned totaled 3,003. 461 books were given out on vacation cards.

The Library was open on 18 Sundays with a total attendance of 765 patrons who used the reading rooms.

Extension work

Extension work has grown in one respect. With the trained juvenile workers, Miss Sorenson and Miss Starkey, we have been able to get in closer touch than ever before with the schools. Each room in every school, including the Normal School and the parochial schools have been visited and told about the Library. The work of the State Reading Circle was introduced with good results. This has encouraged the children in wider reading in every class and has brought children to the Library who read very little before. The Superintendent of Schools and the teachers have given their splendid co-operation. They have expressed gratitude to us for instruction in the use of the Library which we have given to the pupils. Without their help, we could not have accomplished what we did.

Our stations were discontinued after the epidemic. Resulting illness of the staff made it impossible to continue them after the Library was again open. Later an actual shortage of books would have compelled us to give them up. We have been able to give more individual service

this year, and in some instances it has constituted real community service. This year we have felt that the public document room has justified itself for the amount of time it has required to keep it in order. We have used the patent reports time and again as well as the publications of nearly every department. We have been glad that we could turn to them so readily.

On several occasions we have taken advantage of the Inter-Library Loan. We are grateful to the Chicago Public Library and to the Minnesota Engineering Library for important loans. The Library Commission and the University Library have always been ready to assist us.

The High School Branch was organized this year. A beautiful, well lighted room on the second floor of the High School was given for his purpose. This was fitted up with shelving, tables, chairs, librarian's desk, and periodical and atlas cases. The room was redecorated in tans and browns and new brown shades were purchased for the windows.

With the \$1500 appropriation, we were able to make a good beginning. A regular High School librarian who had been engaged, was unable to come to us. Miss Ruth Sorenson was sent over until March, when Miss Ruth Gower, a former teacher in the High School, took charge. Miss Gower had been the regular staff since last August and was pursuing a course offered by the University Extension Division for high school librarians.

The High School Branch has relieved the Main Library of some of its reference work, and has reached many pupils who would not have come in contact with the library. We respectfully ask the Council to again appropriate \$1500 for the High School Branch.

A definite outline of work was carried on with High School pupils during the year. Regular instruction in classification, arrangement of books, and the use of the catalog and periodical indexes was given, with problems in each case. Lessons on the various reference books, such as the dictionaries, encyclopedias, year books, atlases and handbooks, were given.

336 new books were purchased. These together with the 510 books already owned by the High School gives a total of 846 books.

Students were compelled to spend the whole period in the Library. This avoided confusion and simplified the roll call record. It became necessary to limit the attendance in the Library to one period a day as only 52

students could be accommodated at one time. The total attendance for the year was 20,434.

Books were circulated from the High School Branch. Often the time had to be limited to a shorter period than at the Main Library. 2,347 books and periodicals were issued for home use.

Children's work

The work of the Children's librarian begins with the careful selection of books for the children's room and her task is not completed until her aim to get the right book to the right child at the right time has been accomplished.

During the past year, several methods to accomplish this have been pursued. The work naturally divides itself into two divisions: the work done in the children's room and the work done in co-operation with the schools.

At the Library the children are aided in selecting their books, both by lists and by personal supervision of the librarians. During the fall and winter, story hours were held. 2,063 children enjoyed the 58 story hours conducted on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. At one time, lantern slides illustrating "Alice in Wonderland" were shown, and at another time, Victrola records were enjoyed in connection with a talk on birds.

The story hour record is as follows:

Total attendance:	
Lower grades	1508
Upper grades	555
Total	2063

The greatest effort of the work with children has been concentrated upon the problem of reaching more children and bringing about a better co-operation between the Library and the schools.

125 school visits were made with this in view, and the work of the Wisconsin Reading Circle was established through this channel. By means of the Reading Circle work, we have been able to reach children who have not manifested an interest in reading hither-to. They were encouraged to follow a systematic course of reading which proved both pleasant and profitable. It was only by the most generous substitution that we were able to supply the demand for books which had been created.

Through the kindly co-operation of the Supt. of Schools and the teachers of the upper grades, it was possible to bring 27 groups of children to the Library for instruction in the use of books and libraries. The instruction was of an elementary nature, and was followed by a practical application of the principles outlined.

38,427 books were loaned for home use. Of these 21,026 were fiction and 17,401 were non-fiction.

During the coming year, we hope to increase the membership of the Reading Circle and to work out more fully a graded course of instruction in the use of the library.

Gifts and courtesies

The Library is indebted to its friends for numerous gifts and courtesies; -- the Press for generous space in its columns; the various city departments for carrying books to stations and schools and other favors; and to the florists for flowers and plants. We extend to all cordial thanks for aid and co-operation.

Staff

Miss Julia Starkey, who was formerly a member of the Staff, has again come back to us after an absence of three years during which time she has had a year at the Normal School, one year at Oberlin, and has finished a course for children's librarians at the Carnegie Library School of Pittsburgh. Miss Alice Evenson left on June 1st for a years leave of absence to study at the University. She will also be on the State Historical Library Staff as a student-assistant. We were very glad to have Miss Rosalie Beal from the Wisconsin Library School for six weeks. Miss Beal had her field practice with us. She proved of untold value. At different times we have had Miss Vera Eastland, Miss Bertha Trowbridge and Mildred Stetekluh with us for short periods.

We are sorry to announce that Miss Ruth Gower has resigned as High School Librarian to take up teaching again. A 50% increase in salary proved too big an inducement but as Miss Gower expressed it, "I regret that I can't afford to stay with you."

Needs

Certain needs are now pressing. Our walls as a result of using soft coal need redecorating. Our Library is such a beautiful building and is admired by our own citizens and by transients who often can not pass by but feel they must come in. They are impressed by the arrangement of rooms and stacks and do not hesitate to tell us of their delight. We must not allow the building to deteriorate. I believe that the two reading rooms have never been redecorated. The stack room has been done, but there is now a crying need to go over it again. We have been very much hampered by lack of shelving, but now have plans which can tide us over for another year. The public document room needs a new ceiling.

The appropriation must be greatly increased. Library salaries must be increased to meet the higher cost of living. There is a great scarcity of library workers. Many have left the profession to go into other lines of work which pay better salaries or to other states where salaries are better. Books, supplies, fuel and every other thing has advanced in price so that the present appropriation will not provide the same service as before. The community has already suffered because we have not been able to maintain stations for lack of books and help. A city of this size should have library service provided for the entire community. We ought to begin thinking of regular branch systems. The people on the North side and Shawtown should have regular collections of books and periodicals at their disposal.

The building itself needs attention this year. Shelving, redecorating, and repairs must be cared for.

To the Board of Directors for their support and co-operation and to my fellow workers on the staff for their splendid loyalty, I wish to express my personal heartfelt thanks. Without their faithful support we could never have carried on as we have.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura M. Olsen

