



OSKALOOSA PUBLIC LIBRARY
P. O. BOX 347
OSKALOOSA, KANSAS 66066

A History of the Library Addition

The foundation of the new addition to the Oskaloosa Public Library began with a bequest from the Maud Thompson estate in December of 1984. A life long member of Oskaloosa, Maud Thompson and her husband, Fred, contributed extensively to the community. Simultaneously, the State Library in Topeka announced the availability of LSCAII(Library Service & Construction Act) funds for public libraries. Thanks to Maud Thompson, the Oskaloosa Library was able to meet the most important criteria-that of matching funds, and complete a grant application.

A building committee was formed and held its' first meeting on January 15, 1985. Members were David Hodges, chairman, Steve Good, Tom Krebs, Marguerite Holroyd, Debbie Finley, Linda Pisocki, and Paula Ware, Librarian. After discussion of needs were held, the committee contacted and hired Walter Hicks of Lawrence, Kansas as project architect.

On April 19, 1985, the architect, librarian, committee members, and interested patrons attended the LSCAII hearings at the State Capitol building in Topeka. The grant committee voted unanimously to fund the entire amount of the Oskaloosa request: \$23,000 for an addition to the Library.

September 24, 1985, bid proposals for the addition were opened at the Library. Seven general contractors submitted bids. Winston-Brown Construction Co., Inc. of Topeka was awarded the contract. Construction began in November and was completed in February of 1986.

The City of Oskaloosa and the Oskaloosa Township also contributed to the Library addition. The City funded the painting, carpeting, and kitchen cabinets for the room and the Township gave money to help in the purchase of tables, chairs, and other equipment.

With the generosity of the late Maud Thompson, the help of various governments, the dedication of hard working Library supporters and staff, the Oskaloosa Public Library continues to grow and enrich the community of Oskaloosa.

Oskaloosa Public Library

-Highlights of it's History-

The Oskaloosa Library has provided a feast of books for the town and vicinity for 73 years. It has been a movable feast. This building with the beautiful new room is the sixth location of the library. It was begun in 1913 upstairs in the old Opera House(on the west side of the square); in 1930 it was in the Critchfield Mansion(on the site of Cherokee Lodge); then the Library moved to an inside second floor room of the Union Block(above the R & H Department Store); and in 1950 we find it in the basement of the Oskaloosa State Bank(now the Old Bank Cafe). 1960 brought another change to a ground floor back room in the Courthouse Annex. Finally in 1965 the Library ended it's pilgrimage and came to a firm rest right here in it's own ground floor, street-front location.

At approximately the same time a settled home was made for the book collection, the Oskaloosa Public Library became a member of the Northeast Kansas Library System. The "System" helps libraries financially with system grants, educationally with workshops, in an advocacy role with government agencies and in an advisory role whenever a librarian needs help.

It has been an increasingly nutritious and available feast. In the beginning the books were all donated (supplemented by occasional trunks of books loaned by the State Library). Perhaps at a given time there were 400 books available. Now in the permanent collection there are 8,700 books. In addition all books in the State's Public Libraries (including University Libraries) are available via inter-library loan. Quite a feast of books is now being served six days a week, 40 hours a week; up from one day, two hours a week in 1913.

Behind the feast is money. In the beginning all books and services were donated; rent and utilities were paid from solicited contributions. In 1949 the City of Oskaloosa budgeted \$200 for the Library. In 1951 the Library legally became the Oskaloosa Public Library and more funding sources became available. Now the annual budget (for 1986) is 14,850 from these sources: City=\$4,335, Township=\$2,800, State=\$693, Northeast Kansas Library System=\$3,850, and other monies from Book Barn (a used book outlet for NEKL System Libraries) operations, donations, and memorials.

Behind the places, books and money of the feast are people. There are the "movers and shakers" - the members of the committees and boards, the volunteer staff, the paid staff, and the financial and book contributors, and the "Guests" of the feast - the Library Patrons themselves! The movers and shakers over the years are too numerous to be identified, even numbered. But some stand out. First are the dedicated clubwomen of the 1910 to 1940's who created and operated the Library, and the 1965 Board who purchased the present building. An official Library Board was first appointed by the City in 1949 when Fred Thompson was mayor. So for the past 37 years through hundreds of board meetings, Library board members have guided, coaxed, pleaded, and pressured the community Library to its present honorable state.

Finally the Oskaloosa Public Library provides a feast of more than books. These side dishes add appeal and nutrition to it's fare: children's story hour, art exhibits, special programs, reference service, study room, computer instruction, and a community meeting room. And now, with the new room, the feasting occurs in a much greater, convenient and attractive facility than in 1913, 1949, 1960, and 1985.

Librarians

Helen Clark	1954-1966
Leona Bleil	1966-1973
Marjorie Jeffery	1968-1983
Paula Ware	1983-