

Bradley Public Library,

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During 1936, through the efforts of Jesse A. McCue, supervisor of Bourbonnais Township, Bradley was able to establish a public library as a W. P. A. project, with Mrs. Irene McCue as librarian.

The library was located in a store building at 416 W. Broadway.

The library collection consisted of 200 books which were discards of the Chicago Public Library. These, along with books borrowed from the Illinois State Library, comprised the total number of books available for circulation. In 1942 the W. P. A. withdrew its support, and since the library was allowed to keep the book collection, and since no funds were available for library expenses, several people in the community donated their time and labor in order that the public might continue to have library service. At this time the library was moved to new quarters in the Bradley State and Savings Bank building.

After two years of struggling along to maintain the library, and after much consultation with the State Library at Springfield, Bradley was able to begin operating as a tax-supported institution in 1944. Through donations of books and money by the citizens of Bradley, the collection had grown to 1,000 books, and had a total circulation of 5,329 for the first fiscal year.

The first library board was formed early in 1944; it consisted of six members as follows: Officers

Ben F. LeMaster, president

Evelyn Weakley, secretary

Frances McCue, treasurer

Trustees

Agnes Stelter

Francis Marquis Charles Wallace

In March of 1944, the board hired Edna DeLonais as librarian. She resigned in 1947, and Irene McCue was appointed librarian. She held the position until her retirement in 1964, at which time Mrs. DeLonais was re-hired.

The library was moved to a newly erected building at 422 West Broadway in 1959. At that time the collection consisted of 9,355 books, and the library subscribed to 56 periodicals and one daily newspaper. There were 5,430 borrowers registered at the library, several of whom were nonresident borrowers. In 1966 the library's total circulation was 31,940.

In the late 1960s, the Bradley Public Library joined the Library Systems that had been organized throughout the state, and became a member of the Bur Oak Library System.

Library Systems are supported by state funds and enable small local libraries to give better service to their patrons because of the access to large reference collections. Library Systems enabled the Bradley Public Library to borrow books on a rotating basis to supplement its in-house collection, and to participate in library workshops and in-service training programs.

At the time of Bradley's Diamond Jubilee Celebration in 1967, library board members were: Officers

Leon Slovikoski, president

Evelyn Weakly, secretary

Mable Pilcher, treasurer

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