

A reading Room had been rented from David Patterson and the words "Mechanics' Institute Reading Room" was lettered on the window.

By December 28, 1895, \$220.00 had been paid to David Patterson for services rendered and arrangements were made to secure a new Reading Room, Librarian, and Janitor. However, we find a lapse of two years with no minutes.

Following this lapse, on October 22, 1897, a meeting was held and arrangements made for another long list of periodicals to be ordered, and subscriptions on a graduated scale to be solicited. However, there was again a lapse of several years which seems to show that nothing came of this.

In the office of S. B. Morris in January, 1901, a committee met to open and list new books which had been bought, and to arrange for another Library and Librarian. Four months later the Library was set up in Mrs. Wray's store and she was employed as Librarian with a salary of 1.50 monthly for rent and services. At this same meeting in May, 1901, Mrs. Dorland and Miss Brown were delegated to secure members at 25¢ for a single membership or 50¢ per family to the end of 1901. Evidently results were not very satisfactory for at an October meeting a decision was made not to open the new books at present, and at the fourth meeting of that year, Mrs. Dorland and Miss Brown were appointed to ask the Police Village Trustees for a grant.

On January 13th the annual meeting was held in the Lodge Room in the Barnes Block when the following officers were elected: Pres. Dr. Dorland, Vice-Pres. J. J. Mistele, Treas. T. C. Campbell, Sec. S. B. Morris. The only business arranged for was that Messrs. Dorland and Mistele ask both the Village and Township Councils for grants, that the books at the depot be taken delivery of and opened, and that Mrs. Wray be paid \$18.00 for a years' service.

At the May meeting in 1902, \$143.33 was reported as having been spent for books but there was no further activity.

An annual meeting was called for January 12, 1903 which was to be held in Wray's store, but for lack of attendance it was adjourned to January 19th - the report for this date was "no better success - called off."

We feel that at this period in our Library's history the break with the Mechanics' Institute came about, although the Minute Book does not definitely say so. Thirty-six memberships were reported as sold at 50¢ single and 75¢ per family in 1903. After a lapse of five years the following statistics are all the information available.

1908	- - -	12	members
1909	- - -	13	"
1910	- - -	7	"
1911	- - -	37	"
1912	- - -	6	"
1913	- - -	24	" (of whom 16 were complimentary)

In 1913 the Library was moved to the office of E.A. Hugill who was to act as Librarian at \$18.00 per year.

Another three year break is noted and we read of the annual meeting held February 7, 1916 in Mr. Hugill's office when the minutes use the words "Rodney Public Library". Whether this was actually the first annual meeting of the newly named organization, we cannot be sure, but from this time forward the growth of Rodney's Library has been steady.

At this period we find all the directors were women with Rev. J. P. Falconer as President and Mrs. S.B. Morris to assist them. The Vice-Pres. was Mrs. E.J. Schmid, Sec.-Treas. Mrs. M. Bisnett, Librarian, Miss Carrie Hugill, and other names included were Mrs. G.A. McLevey, Mrs. E.G. Lusty, Mrs. S.M. Dorland, Mrs. A.D. McGugan, and Mrs. B.B. Graham.

The annual meeting returned all officers in 1917. At the May meeting of that year, Mrs. A.D. McGugan and Mrs. E.G. Lusty resigned and were replaced as Directors by Mrs. B. Eggert and Miss Messerschmid. In June a meeting was called to decide upon increased insurance due to a Picture Show Machine being in the same building.

In 1918 the same officers and directors continued in office.

Two new directors were noted in 1919, namely: Mrs. J. Wing, and Mr. J.C. Yorke. The membership was 79 that year.

At the annual meeting in 1920 the names of Mrs. H. McLay Paterson and Mr. H.D. Bake were added as Directors. Receipts for the previous year were \$203.92, and expenditures \$188.90, of which \$156.19 had been spent for books.

At the 1921 annual meeting Rev. J.P. Falconer was named to continue as President (he was made an Honary Member also). One special item of business was a motion asking the Secretary to write the Department requesting a "travelling Library."

From the 1922 minutes of the annual meeting we quote: "That library hours be limited to Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday afternoons and Saturday evening." "That we grant \$10 to school library, provided Village and County give similar grants." Later in the year we read that "the village Council gave the

usual grant of \$50. Mrs. Milton became Librarian in September, 1922 and a table was bought from Mr. Alex Sim for library purposes.

Mrs. A.D. McGugan became President at the annual meeting of 1923, with Mrs. E.J. Schmid as Vice-Pres., and Mrs. M. Bisnett Sec.-Treas., and Mr. J. Gaynor's name was added to the Directorate. Mrs. Milton continued as Librarian at \$30 per year.

The same officers were returned in 1924 with Mr. Reid a new Director. Mrs. Milton resigned owing to illness in her family, and Mrs. M. Bisnett accepted the position beginning November 1st. New rules were drafted and printed in the Rodney Mercury. Library hours were 3 - 5 Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons, and 7.30 to 9 Saturday evening.

At the annual meeting on January 19, 1925, three new names appear among the officers. Mrs. J. Murray, Mrs. Chas. Ludy, and Rev. I.J. Wolland. Mrs. Ludy accepted the office as Assistant Sec.-Treas. Mrs. Bisnett was appointed as delegate to the 25th Annual Meeting of the Ontario Library Association to be held in Toronto in April.

Mrs. M. Bisnett was again named Librarian at the 1926 Annual meeting with Mrs. C.H. Ludy as her assistant. Due to illness Mrs. Bisnett was forced to vacate the office and her duties were assumed by ~~the~~ Mrs. C.H. Ludy. Public School children were given a rate of 25¢ for membership, and Mr. Carmen Evans assisted the purchasing committee in selecting suitable books for young minds.

A good year was reported in 1927 with receipts of \$218.72 and expenditures of \$110.87 - leaving a balance of \$107.87. The large balance was due to Mrs. Bisnett's inability to purchase new books, due to her illness.

At the annual meeting in 1928 the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. B. McGugan, Vice.-Pres. Mrs. H. McL. Paterson, Sec.-Treas. and Librarian, Mrs. C.H. Ludy. Directors Mesdames McGugan, Dorland, Schmid, Janaway, Eggert, Stewart and McLevey. The first provincial grant of \$50 was reported. The Rodney Dramatic Club put on a play charging \$90 for the production. The ushers for this fine event were Sinclair Dorland, Donald Campbell, Allen MacLean, and Jack Burnett.

The same slate of officers and directors was returned at the 1929 annual meeting with one exception, Mrs. C.A. Wray replaced Mrs. E. Janaway.

In 1930 the years' report showed a bank balance of \$176.74. One hundred and twenty-two adult subscribers with 36 pupils were shown, and 140 new books purchased that year. A resolution was passed to record the sense of loss to the Board through the death of Mrs. Dorland, and a letter of sympathy was sent to Dr. Dorland.

The purchase of 130 new books was reported at the 1931 annual meeting, which included 20 Burgess stories for children. Mrs. B. McGugan was again elected as President with Mrs. E.J. Schmid as Vice-Pres. and Mrs. C.H. Ludy Sec.-Treas. and Librarian.

The book-buying committee was Mrs. H. McL. Paterson, Mrs. Wray, Dr. Dorland, and Mrs. Donald Stewart. At a meeting held at the home of Mrs. Paterson in September 1931, plans were made to have lights changed and partitions moved in the Library owing to the alterations and additions made to the Municipal Hall where the Library was housed.

The balance for the year 1932 was \$188.48 with 183 books purchased. A resolution was passed to the effect that juvenile patrons must read junior books. Rev. F.B. Meyer, minister of the Evangelical Church was added to the Board that year. At a meeting held on February 13th of that year the Librarian's salary was raised to \$75 per year and a resolution made that the library hours be Saturday afternoon and evening only, during the months of July and August. Dr. Dorland's death was reported this year and a resolution passed recording the loss of his help in connection with the library. The Library Room was rented to D.M. Shaw a lawyer of Ridgetown, as his office.

A balance of \$148.15 was recorded for 1933 with 77 adult and 56 pupil subscribers and 121 new books added. Mrs. E.J. Schmid was elected President in place of Mrs. B. McGugan, and Mrs. B. Eggert and Mrs. B. McGugan were named as auditors.

In 1934 Mr. G. V. Thornicroft, Principal of Rodney Public School, joined the Board. The bank balance this year was \$76.97. Mr. Thornicroft was given permission to take 12 books per month for use at the school. The Library was visited this year by Mr. Jennings, Library Inspector from Toronto and he suggested that we make request for a travelling library from his department. The first resolution was passed which eventually formed the now known Elgin County Library Co-Operative. Mr. Thornicroft and Mrs. Paterson moved and seconded a motion that the secretary write the Sarnia Public Librarian for information regarding the amalgamation of small libraries in Elgin County.

The annual report of 1935 showed 56 adult and 34 children patrons. Eleven non-fiction books were added in the year, one philosophy, one natural science, three history, one biography, five geography and travel, 21 juvenile fiction and one juvenile natural science. Mr. Thornicroft reported good circulation for the books he had taken each month to the school. He was named this year as the new President. A communication was sent to the Library Inspector regarding organizing a group system with neighbouring libraries. At a meeting dated March 4th, it was decided to communicate with Miss Cameron of the St. Thomas City Library re County organization.

A very small balance of \$42.94 was recorded at the 1936 annual meeting. There had been received three travelling libraries from the Dept. of Education which filled a want for non-fiction books for that type of reader. Letters had been written to all libraries in Elgin County with regard to amalgamation, and as soon as replies were received a general meeting was to be held in St. Thomas. New shelving had been added. A County organization meeting in St. Thomas was called for April 28th and all members urged to attend. Mr. Thornicroft was named as official representative.

A story hour was started for children. The School Board gave a donation of \$10 in return for free reading for school pupils to promote more reading among the pupils.

Ten volumes of the Children's Book shelf had been added during the year of 1937. The Board elected was: Mrs. C.A. Wray, Mrs. B. McGugan, Mrs. H. McL. Paterson, Rev. W. Stesart, Mrs. B. Eggert, Mrs. J. Schmid, with Mr. Thornicroft as President. The Women's Institute was to be interviewed regarding ladies to assist with the story telling hour. Twenty-five dollars was to be spent for non-fiction books for the school pupils.

At the 1938 annual meeting the total circulation for the previous year was given as 6119 and a balance on hand of just \$2.39. Mr. Thornicroft was elected as representative to Elgin County Co-Operative Library. A grant of \$40 was received from the village this year in addition to free quarters. Mrs. Ludy, the Librarian, attended Library School at Western University, London, for two weeks.

Two new members elected to the Board in 1939 were Miss Grace Graham, and Mr. Harvey Miller. Ninety three new books were added during the year and a balance on hand of \$30.42 was reported.

In 1940 a library report from the Dept. of Education gave Rodney much credit for having one of the good rural libraries. Mr. Wm. Goodwin and Mrs. G.L. Mistele were elected as new Board members this year. They took the place of Mr. Thornicroft who had moved from Rodney, and Mrs. E.J. Schmid, a beloved member who passed to her reward during the year. Mrs. C.A. Wray was elected Vice-Pres.. There were 105 school pupils receiving free reading cards and 63 adult subscribers.

Mrs. Olivia Tough was elected a new Board member in 1941. Mrs. C.W. Ludy and Mr. Harvey Miller were elected to the Elgin Co-Operative Board. New curtains had been purchased for the library room. Oak Grove School was given the use of for the fee of \$50.00 of 10 books every month.

Mr. Wm. Bain, teacher at the Rodney High School, was elected to the Board in 1942, also Mrs. A. J. Leibner. A donation of books was received from Mrs. H. McL. Paterson from the library of her late husband who had been a constant reader for many years at the Rodney Public Library.

During 1943 the Library received four travelling libraries from the Dept. of Education, and had the use of about 500 books through the Elgin Co-Operative. A gift of books had been received from the Mumford family.

The Elgin Co-Operative commenced service to the township schools with books in 1944. Mr. H. Miller, the President, told of a legacy of \$7000 from the estate of the McMillan Bros. of Aldborough to the Village of Rodney for the building of a Public Library in their memory to be called the "McMillan Brothers' Library.

Mrs. James Black of Talbot Street, Aldborough Twp. was made a new member of the Board in 1945. Other members included Mrs. A.J. Leibner, Mrs. A.D. McGugan, Mrs. C.A. Wray, Mrs. Robt. (Eggert) Hood, Mrs. G.L. Mistele, Miss Grace Graham, Wm. Goodwin, and H.M. Miller.

At the annual meeting in 1946 the bank balance was \$336.79, with 54 adult and 115 children subscribers.

Mr. H.M. Miller, the President, reported in 1947 that money from the estate of the McMillan Bros. for a Memorial Library, was still not available, so no plans could be made regarding a new building. The total circulation for 1946 was 3904 books. Mrs. C.W. Ludy, the Librarian, took a one month library course in Chatham during the year. The course^{was} given by the Dept. of Education and she received a Class D Librarian Certificate.

The following were named as a Board of Management for the library in 1948: Mesdames Steele, A.D. McGugan, A.J. Leibner, Miss Grace Graham, Mr. A.T. Lashbrook and Earl Fowler. At a meeting of this Board on March 1st, plans were started for the McMillan Memorial Library. - Mrs. Ludy was to write the Library Director for suitable plans.

There was a balance of \$460.76 at the beginning of the year 1949. The Librarian's salary was to be \$150. for this year. The Rodney Lodge I.O.O.F. had made the gift of a lot for the new Library beside their own building which was acknowledged with many thanks.

There were 168 members of the library in the year 1949 as reported at this annual meeting, with a balance on hand of \$455.05. The large surplus was in anticipation of equipment and furnishings for the new Library which was soon to be started. Mrs. D.G. MacDiarmid was a new Board Member in place of the late Wm. Goodwin who had served for a number of years. Mr. H.M. Miller continued as President with Mrs. C.W. Ludy as Sec.-Treas. and Librarian.

In 1951 Mr. J. Allan Fletcher was a new Board member replacing Mrs. H.A. Mistele who had been taken ill. The membership fee was raised to \$1 from 75¢ at this meeting, with the privilege of taking out four books at one time. Mrs. Ludy's salary was raised to \$200 per year. A set of plans was presented to the meeting by the President. These were plans of a Detroit Library and were drawn by Mr. Harold Easton of Detroit and presented without charge to the Library Board. A resolution was passed accepting the plans and a letter to the effect was to be sent to the Village Council. The 1951 Board was Mesdames C.A. Wray, E. Janaway, A.J. Leibner, A.C. Steele, Mrs. D.G. MacDiarmid, Miss Grace Graham, Messrs. A.T. Lashbrook, and Earl Fowler. *The new library opened November 1st 1951.*

*Mrs Gordon Stinson joined library staff in 1965.
Miss Cathy Taylor joined staff as a student in 1975.
Mrs Ludy retired in 1976 and Mrs Gerald De
Graw joined library as assistant librarian.
Mrs Stinson was made supervisor, Nancy McCall
was student employee from Aug 1979 to Aug. 1982. Miss
Ann Marie Somerville joined the library staff as a student
in Aug 1982.*