

In 1929 the Twentieth Century Club of Grenada, with Mrs. John Keeton, Sr. as president, became interested in promoting some means of intellectual advancement in the community since it was primarily a study group. At the suggestion of one of the members, Mrs. E. B. Provine, it was decided that an attempt should be made to establish a public library. The town was canvassed for books and with the help of the Boy Scouts, about 500 volumes were collected and stored at the home of Mrs. Keeton pending further developments. Local talent produced a play called "Aunt Lucia" and the club realized \$125.00 which was held in custody by Mrs. W. B. Waterman. Unfortunately the beginning of the depression paralyzed all action for several years.

In 1933 the WPA Library Project was opened and the Twentieth Century Club was contacted for local sponsorship. Since the WPA was chiefly interested in giving work to individuals regardless of their qualifications, the club, hoping to establish a permanent institution refused to have anything to do with it unless the one in charge at least had some knowledge of books. They finally consented to sponsor the project if Miss Elizabeth Jones could be employed as librarian. Except for this foresightedness on the part of the club, the library would probably have folded up with the passing of the WPA as it did in many counties.

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED

Miss Jones was instructed to find out how to organize a library and turned first to Grenada College as the nearest pattern. Miss Faye Griffeth who was librarian at the college advised with her and the committees about setting up an organization according to library specifications since from the very first the idea of building for permanency was foremost in the minds of all concerned. A Library Association was organized with dues to help finance needs other than salaries. Some of the most faithful members of this group other than those already mentioned were Mrs. John Rundle, Mrs. F. S. York, Mrs. H. J. Ray, Sr., Mrs. Cowles Horton and Mrs. J. B. Perry, Sr. It was through the untiring effort of these and other members of the Twentieth Century Club that the library was steered through the stormy waters of government politics and the early struggles with local authorities for financial support.

LIBRARY FORMALLY OPENED

On February 9, 1934 the Grenada County Library was formally opened in the front end of what was then the County Rest Room, upstairs in the building next to Grenada Bank. The Twentieth Century Club held a reception for the public in this room and many citizens gathered to see the new library. Three book stacks, a magazine rack and checking equipment had been purchased, a table and chairs donated and the old books culled and mended. A few new books had been added to the collection and the new educational institution was open for business with more enthusiasm than books and equipment.

As the Library Project gradually expanded, Miss Mary

Moore Mitchell worked for a short time and then went on to take her degree in Library Science. She is now head of the Richland Parish Library at Rayville, Louisiana. Mrs. Augusta Beaty Richardson also helped to develop the library when she was in charge in 1935-1937 while Miss Jones was employed as librarian at Grenada College. During this period stations were set up in many communities in the county and were staffed with WPA workers. Mrs. Annie Tharpe and Mrs. T. J. Morman worked at Gore Springs, Mrs. Minnie Hubbard at Taylor's Chapel, Mrs. Mary Gully at Hardy, Mrs. Gee at Holcomb, Mrs. Isa Cohea at Elliott as well as many others. Books were taken monthly to these stations and many of the one room schools in the county were served in the same manner.

In 1936 the Community House on Line Street, a WPA project was completed and the library was moved to the area allotted to it in this building. An adjacent room was made available for mending and processing and many additional WPA workers were added to the staff. Miss Annie Mansker supervised this group of workers which included Mrs. Lilla Clogston, Mrs. Ruby Spears, Mrs. Alice McLeod and several others who repaired and rebound books as well as processing new ones.

The Twentieth Century Club held a Silver Tea and \$150.00 was realized for the expenses of the project. By this time the City was contributing \$300.00 and the County \$150.00 annually to the library.

History of Elizabeth Jones Library

REQUIREMENTS MET TO LEGALIZE

Late in 1938 the librarian was contacted by Miss Pearl Sneed, secretary of the State Library Commission, in regard to the use of a WPA bookmobile and 600 books to be loaned to the county on a demonstration project. The requirements to be met locally were to legalize the library under Senate Bill 168, have a Board of Trustees appointed by the County Supervisors and to guarantee the expenses of the bookmobile travel. Firmly supported by the Twentieth Century Club, the library was legalized on December 5, 1938. The first Official Board consisted of Mrs. Stark Willis, Mrs. F. S. York, Mr. B. J. Anderson, Mrs. Ed Holcomb and Mr. A. M. Carothers. Mrs. John Rundle was the advisor from the club and she and Miss Sneed attended the first meeting and helped to formulate the policies of the institution. Since by that time the library had an income of about \$75.00 a month it was decided that the demonstration could be carried out. The bookmobile was put into operation that month with Richard Chapuis as driver and Mrs. Cohea as book distributor. Fourteen stations and seven schools were served every two weeks and Grenada Industries was visited at the noon hour once a week. After the demonstration was completed in 1940, many people volunteered to keep books in their homes as a service to their communities. This practice was continued until 1970 at which time the trustees felt that since this was a small county and since transportation

was no longer a problem library patrons could be better served by coming to the main library for their library materials. Present circulation indicated that this was a wise decision. In 1941 the Library Board began paying Miss Jones a salary of \$55.00 a month and in 1943 when all WPA assistance was discontinued, Miss Fay Griffeth was employed as assistant librarian.

The opening of Camp McCain placed a tremendous burden on the resources of this small library since many of the workers, soldiers and visitors came from larger communities and were accustomed to more facilities and entertainment. Since the USO was using the rest of the Community House for soldier recreation, the librarian volunteered to open the library one night each week for special soldier service and forums.

LARGEST GIFT RECEIVED

It was during this year that

the library received its first and largest memorial gift. The friends of Mr. and Mrs. John Rundle gave more than \$800.00 in memory of their son, John Nabors Rundle who died in Naval Service in World War II. The nucleus of the Biography, English and reference collections was purchased from this fund. Later the Twentieth Century Club honored some of its past members and placed in the library a "Book of Remembrance" in which the names of donors and memorial are recorded. Many beautiful and valuable books have enriched the collection from memorial gifts over the years.

By this time the room allotted to the library had been completely outgrown and since the USO was now using their new building on Main Street, Mrs. J. B. Perry, Sr. led a committee of club members who met with the City Board of Aldermen and obtained the use of the large assembly room in the community house. The club donated \$75.00 toward furnishing the new room. Tables, charging desk and chairs were purchased and these allowed the library to give much better service and to enlarge the scope of work with the schools. A special noon hour was inaugurated so that county children who attended to city schools could visit the library and select books. Classes were invited in a body to receive library instructions and to enjoy a story hour. Many adults in the community still recall with pleasure the "Uncle Remus" stories which Miss Jones told in such a delightful manner.

The librarian was allowed to attend LSU Library School for four summers at the end of which she received her B.S. degree in Library Science. During this time Miss Griffeth was in charge and other

workers were Mrs. Griffis Meek, Mrs. G. S. Granberty and Mrs. Roberta Burkley. By 1952 the circulation had increased to such a degree that Mrs. Burkley was employed on a permanent basis as circulation clerk. She was followed by Mrs. W. A. Winter. When Mrs. Winter resigned in 1956 Mrs. Meek began regular work in this position. Upon the retirement of Miss Griffeth in 1958, Mrs. Meek became assistant librarian and Mrs. J. W. Martin was employed as circulation assistant. In 1956 the position was assumed by Mrs. Frances West.

MORE SPACE ADDED

As circulation increased and the need for more space, more books and increased staff arose, several changes and improvements were undertaken. In July 1963 Mrs. Judy Gober was employed as a part-time worker and a Gaylord Charging Machine was installed. In November of that year the City of Grenada released the entire building for the use of the library. At that time the work room was moved to a room in the rear and a wall opened between the main library and the former work room to provide an entire room for the children's section. Ceilings were lowered and recessed, fluorescent lighting was added as well as central heating and air conditioning.

Upon the resignation of Mrs. Meek in January 1964, Mrs. West became the assistant

librarian and Mrs. Georgia Derrington was employed as circulation clerk until her removal to New Orleans in 1966.

In 1966 Miss Jones reached retirement age and in December of that year she was honored by the Twentieth Century Club with a tea which was held at the Monte Cristo Restaurant. On this occasion resolutions were read expressing the appreciation of the community for the splendid service which she had rendered through the years. By order of the County Board of Supervisors the name of the library was officially changed from Grenada County Library to Elizabeth Jones Library and a bronze plaque bearing the name was presented and ordered to be placed on the library entrance.

The reorganized staff now consisted of Frances West, librarian, Pauline Rowe, assistant librarian, Judy Gover circulation clerk and Dorothy Mann, part-time assistant. After the sudden death of Mrs. Mann in 1968, Mrs. Ann Manscoe assumed the duties of part-time help.

In November of 1968 the library again entered a remodeling program. The one unused room remaining in the building was opened into the main library and was divided into a large room for reference and study and a smaller room for the librarian's office. The work room was enlarged and storage space increased to accommodate the files of

magazines.

In 1969 there was another change in personnel. Pauline Rowe resigned to take a position with the welfare department and Judy Gover to attend to personal responsibilities. Ann Manscoe then became bookkeeper and Mrs. Joan Houston and Mrs. Farrie Lockett joined the staff. Mrs. Hildegard Lundy was employed in 1971 when Mrs. Houston moved from Grenada.

At the present time Elizabeth Jones Library owns more than 27,000 volumes, besides magazines, record albums, pamphlets, slides and projectors and other material. Service is given to the blind and physically handicapped with Talking Book machines and Talking Books and cassette players and tapes. About twelve residents of the county are served in this manner. New shelving, a second card catalog, a charging desk and a copying machine have all been added for the purpose of better serving more people.

The present Board of Trustees consists of Mr. J. B. Perry, Jr., chairman, Mrs. John Rundle, Mrs. P. H. Willis, Mr. J. C. Hathorn and Mr. J. M. Ainsworth. Of these, Mrs. Rundle has been associated with the library since the time that it was only a dream in the minds of the members of the Twentieth Century Club and Mr. Hathorn has served as a member of the Official Board since 1941.

