

THE HISTORY OF GRENADA COUNTY



Grenada, Mississippi

Preface

This publication is the work of many people. Requests for personal histories have been made to pioneer families and others who once lived in the area and played a part in the development of the communities, by letters, newspaper advertisements, and by word of mouth.

There are bound to be errors or omissions, as with any publication, but we have endeavoured to provide a cross section of information on every topic and still be as factual as possible.

We believe that you will find countless hours of happy reading, and that "HISTORY OF GRENADA COUNTY" will become a treasured possession for generations to come.

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A major summertime activity at Grenada is swimming. Swimmers and sunbathers abound on the natural beaches around the lake. Areas have been designed and marked off with buoys to provide safe swimming areas separate from other water oriented activities.

Boaters enjoy year-round use of the lake with an average of some 34,000 acres of water. There is plenty of room for a variety of boating activities including skiing, sailing, and pleasure boating.

Wildlife is a major asset of Grenada Lake. Here there is an abundance of natural game. Hunters enjoy the freedom of hunting any game according to the Mississippi Game and Fish Commission regulations. Increased efforts are being made to provide food and cover to protect and attract additional wildlife to the area. Here, bicolor lespedeza is planted especially to improve quail production. It furnishes excellent food and cover. Japanese millet is planted to furnish food for doves. The Mississippi Game and Fish Commission operates a Waterfowl Management area on the reservoir. There they provide food and nesting places for thousands of waterfowl. In addition, we have erected some 300 Wood Duck nesting boxes around the lake. A fish nursery pond was constructed in order to release selected species of fingerlings directly into the lake.

One thing we are proud of here at Grenada is the world champion sumac tree. It has been recognized by the American Forest Association as the largest one ever discovered.

Grenada Lake is also the site of two Civil War forts. One of these forts has been restored to its original condition; and on special occasions throughout the year, Civil War demonstrations are held here. Many of the most authentic Civil War buffs in the country gather here to recreate life of the Civil War era. Every aspect of the soldier's life is depicted as authentically

as possible. The tents they camp in, the food they eat, the clothes they wear, the weapons they use—everything is a relic or an exact replica of Civil War times.

Battles between Confederate and Yankee troops take place throughout the day to entertain and delight visitors. The battles, with cannons and rifles firing, will make you feel like you really are right in the middle of a war.

The other fort has been left in its natural condition as it was discovered when the Corps of Engineers obtained the land. It is in especially good condition for being over 100 years old. Both forts have been included in the Natural Register of Historic Sites.

The Mississippi Future Farmers of America operates a group camp and farm on the project. The camp facilities, which include cabins, a dining hall and swimming pool, are also available for use by other groups. Each year several football camps and training sessions are conducted here, in addition to Future Farmers of America activities.

The Girls Scouts also have camp overlooking Grenada Lake. Each year hundreds of girls enjoy the many activities offered by this fine facility.

The Lakeshore Lodge, adjacent to the beach at Grenada Landing, provides excellent dining on the lake. Enjoy fresh catfish as a specialty of the house. The famous salad boat is a dining experience you'll never forget.

In addition, nearby local motels and restaurants provide outstanding accommodations to visitors. Local business as well provide opportunities for visitors to obtain any desired services or supplies.

Don't you agree—Grenada Lake has it all—Plan to make your next outdoor recreation experience one you'll always remember. Visit Grenada Lake. You'll be glad you did.

Submitted by Thomas M. Norton, Manager

Elizabeth Jones Library

In 1929 the Twentieth Century Club of Grenada, with Mrs. John Keeton, Sr. as president, was interested in promoting some means of intellectual advancement in the community since they were 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 start a public library. The town was canvassed for books and with the assistance of the Boy Scouts about 500 volumes were collected and stored at the home of Mrs. Keeton pending further

developments. A play called "Aunt Lucia" was given by local talent and the club realized \$125.00 which was held in custody for the library by Mrs. W. B. Waterman. However, during the next few years all action was paralyzed by the depression.

The WPA Library Project was opened in 1933 and the Twentieth Century Club was contacted for local sponsorship. Since the WPA was primarily interested in giving jobs to individuals regardless of their qualifications, and the club hoping to establish a permanent

institution, would have nothing to do with it unless the person in charge at least had a knowledge of books. They finally consented to sponsor the project if Miss Elizabeth Jones could be employed as librarian. But 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 so many counties.

Miss Jones was instructed to find out how to organize a library and turned first to Grenada College as the nearest pattern. Miss Faye Griffith, then librarian at the college, advised with her ~~and committees~~ about setting the organization required by library specifications. From the first, the idea of building for permanency was strong. A Library Association with dues was organized to help finance other needs than salaries. Some of the most faithful members of this group other than those already mentioned, were Mrs. John Rundle, Mrs. C. C. Penn, Mrs. F. S. York, Mrs. H. J. Ray, Sr., Mrs. Cowles Horton and Mrs. J. B. Perry, Sr. It was through the untiring efforts 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.

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 bought and so the new educational institution was open and ready for business with more enthusiasm than books.

As the Library Project was gradually expanded, Miss Mary Moore Mitchell worked for a short time and then went on to take her degree in Library Science and was head of the Richland Parish Library at Rayville, Louisiana. Mrs. Augusta Beatty Richardson also helped to develop the library when she was in charge 1935-1937 while Miss Jones was employed as librarian at Grenada College. During this period stations were set up with WPA workers at many communities in the county. 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 and many others. Books were taken out monthly by the librarian and the many 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 project. Miss Annie Mensker supervised this group of workers, which included Mrs. Lila Clogston, Mrs. Ruby Spears, Mrs. Alice McLeod and many others who did faithful work in repairing and rebinding books as well as processing new ones.

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

Late in 1938 the library 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. The requirements to be met locally were to legalize the library under Senate Bill 166 and have the Board of Trustees appointed by the Board of Supervisors and to guarantee the expenses of the bookmobile travel. With the firm support of the Twentieth Century Club the library was legalized on December 5, 1938. The first Board of Trustees consisted of Mrs. Ed Holcomb, Mrs. Stark Willis, Mrs. F. S. York, Mr. B. J. Anderson 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. Since at 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 in December 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 finished in 1940, many people volunteered to keep books in their homes for their communities. This service was continued until 1970 at which time the trustees made the decision that since Grenada was a small county and that transportation was no longer a problem library patrons could be better served by coming to the main library for their library materials. Present circulation indicates that this was a wise decision.

In 1941 the Library Board employed Miss Jones at a salary of \$55.00 a month and when all WPA assistance was discontinued in 1943, Miss Faye Griffith was employed as assistant librarian.

The opening of Camp McCain sorely taxed the resources of this small library as many of the workers, families of soldiers, and visitors came from larger communities and were accustomed to many 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 a week for special soldier service and forums.

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 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 memorials are recorded. Many beautiful and valuable books have enriched the collection from memorial gifts over the years.

At this time since the room allotted to the library was completely outgrown and since the USO was now using their larger 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 shelves were built and chairs purchased. These facilities 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 attending the city schools could visit the library and select books. Classes were invited in a body to receive library instruction and enjoy a story hour.

The librarian was allowed to attend LSU Library School for four summers at the end of which time she received her BS degree in Library Science. During this time Miss Griffith was in charge and other workers were Mrs. Griffis Meek, Mrs. G. S. Granberry and Mrs. Roberta Burkley. By 1952 the circulation had increased so much that Mrs. Burkley was employed on a permanent basis as circulation assistant. She was succeeded by Mrs. W.A. Winter. When Mrs. Winter resigned in 1956, Mrs. Meek began regular work in this position. Upon the retirement of Miss Griffith in 1958, Mrs. Meek became assistant librarian and Mrs. J.W. Martin was employed as circulation assistant. In 1959 this position was assumed by Mrs. Frances West.

As circulation increased and the need for more space, more books and increased staff arose, several changes and improvements were undertaken. In 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 florescent lighting were added as well as central heating and air conditioning.

Upon the resignation of Mrs. Meek in January 1964, Frances 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 for the splendid service which she had rendered through the years. By the 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 library staff now consisted of Frances West, librarian, Pauline Rowe, assistant librarian, Judy Gober, circulation clerk and Dorothy Mann, part-time assistant. After the sudden death of Mrs. Mann in July 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 Gober to attend the needs of her family. Ann Manscoe then became the bookkeeper and Mrs. Joan Houston and Mrs. Farrie Lockett joined the staff and in January 1971 because of the increasing circulation, Mrs. Barbara Garrett was employed on a part-time basis, and Mrs. Hildegard Lundy was employed to replace Mrs. Houston upon her move to Kosciusko.

At the present time Elizabeth Jones Library owns over 35,000 volumes. Salaries have been increased to equalize them with other positions of a similar nature. In addition to remodeling the building, new shelving, a second card catalog, a charging desk, slide projector and a copying machine have been added to the facilities. Service is given to the blind and physically handicapped with talking book machines, cassette player tapes and records. Twenty-six residents of the county are served in this manner.

Mrs. Peggy Little joined the staff in August, 1974, Mrs. Lou Sargent in July, 1975 and our new Librarian, Mrs. Maryhardy McElwain, in April, 1979.

Trustees of the present time are Mr. J. B. Perry, Jr. Chairman, Mrs. J. M. Ainsworth, Mrs. Marshall Perry, Mrs. William Holcomb, and Mr. J. C. Hathorn, secretary, who has served as a member of this board since July, 1941.

At the present time the Library has more than 5,000 borrowers with more than 71,000 yearly circulation.