

HISTORY OF THE LAKEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

LAKEWOOD, OHIO

1938-1960

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CONTENTS

Introduction

I. The Community Background

II. The Early History of Lakewood Public Library

III. The Library's Government and Financial Support

IV. The Physical Organization

V. The Book Collection

VI. The Organization Structure and Personnel

VII. The Library and the Community

Footnotes

Bibliography

## INTRODUCTION

This study, except for a brief historical summary, is limited to the last twenty-two years of the Library's history. The first twenty-five years of the history are covered thoroughly in a detailed paper by Miss Mary Reed.\* It is intended that the present work should supplement and bring up-to-date this earlier work rather than duplicate it.

I am indebted to Miss Reed for the basic organization of this paper which is borrowed from her work. I felt that it would better serve as a supplement in the basic pattern followed logically that of the earlier work.

I have used a great many quotations throughout this paper, both in the sections devoted to the study of the community and the history of the Library. I have done this in an effort to show the more human side of the situation and because I feel that as important as the actual facts about a community and its library are the ideas that the people hold about their city and its institution.

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Reed, Mary Martha, History of The Lakewood Public Library, Lakewood, Ohio; The First Twenty-Five Years, 1913-1928.  
Master of Library science paper, Western Reserve University,  
School of Library science, September 1958.

## I. THE COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

More than any thing else the public library in America is a social institution. Therefore, the study of any particular public library is of little value unless it considers the community which that library serves.

The American public library is a social invention designed for the preservation and dissemination of certain cultural products of the nation and the community... The American society, extolling social progress and individual improvement, set up the public library as an agency to institutionalize opportunity for its citizens. Just as other community services become specialized and centralized, so the public library became the community's depository of knowledge, information, and entertainment --in so far as they<sub>1</sub> are contained in library materials.

By 1812, Cleveland was on its way to becoming a town at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River and a sizable settlement had grown up at the mouth of the Rocky River. Until that date no settler had been attracted to the land in between, the land that is now the city of Lakewood. In that year James Nicholson traded a clearing near Conneaut for a tract of timber land near Cleveland. He acquired 160 acres in his trade. Later he bought another 160. After this date the area gradually attracted more settlers.<sup>2</sup> One of these men, Rufus Wright, was linked with Rockport's early government and transportation. He came to the area about 1816, purchased about an acre of land, and put up a tavern where the Westlake Hotel now stands on the north-west side of Lakewood.<sup>3</sup>

Until 1819 no one had had time, with the clearing of land and building homes, to worry about the lack of local government. But people were growing tired of having the area known only as Township No. 7. On February 24, 1819 the county commissioners at Cleveland were petitioned and the district was officially

named "Rockport." Notice of an election of officers was held in Rufus Wright's tavern. There were eighteen offices to be filled and only nineteen voters.<sup>4</sup> The officers elected were judges, trustees, overseers of the poor, clerk, lister, and fence viewers. This type of government served Rockport for the next seventy years.<sup>5</sup>

In the early 19th century there was no road in any direction west of the Cuyahoga River. Travel through Rockport was at first over narrow paths marked by blazed trees and over a few old Indian trails. In 1809 the state government voted funds for a highway from Cleveland to the mouth of the Huron River. Primarily intended as a post road, it followed the Lake Ridge west over the Lake Indian Trail and crossed Rocky River near its mouth.<sup>6</sup> In 1820 a stage line was established and Rufus Wright was instrumental in getting a better road from Cleveland to Rocky River. As soon as roads improved population in Rockport increased.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1840's there was a influx of settlers along Detroit Road from New England and New York state.<sup>8</sup> By 1848 Rockport had about thirty families on Detroit Street between west 117th Street and Rocky River. All the original log cabins had been replaced by frame or stone houses. Most people earned their living from vineyards or orchards. Cleveland's growing populations offered a ready market for their products.<sup>9</sup>

In 1874 fruit growers and builders out numbered all other occupations. "New settlers, attracted to Rockport because of the fruit farms and vineyards, built houses so rapidly that they crowded out the very thing that attracted them."<sup>10</sup> There was no need for Rockport to expand industrially because of the phenomenal growth of Cleveland. This directly affected the character of the community. "Wealthy residents of Cleveland had been attracted to the suburb as an ideal place for a summer retreat and many beautiful homes were built. Gradually the strip along the lake was losing its identity as a farming

site and becoming a summer resort. Thus Rockport was already setting the pattern for its future development as a city of homes.<sup>11</sup>

In 1871 an election was held for the purpose of joining school subdistricts six, eight, and ten into one school district. There were no dissenting votes, so Rockport now became identified with its own school district.<sup>12</sup> Rockport was growing up. In the middle 1880's population was increasing and community feeling no longer fitted the pattern of the township. In September 1885 a petition signed by thirty electors was presented to the county commissioners for incorporation under the name of Hamlet of Lakewood. It was granted in December, but a lawsuit held up official incorporation until August 1889.<sup>13</sup>

A pamphlet by Thomas A. Knight, entitled Beautiful Lakewood, in 1902, described Lakewood in this way.

In many respects Lakewood is as much a city as a majority of the towns of the state. Its population is in the neighborhood of 5,000 with every prospect of having twice or three times this number of inhabitants within the next ten years. On the other hand, it has none of the disadvantages of city life. The objectionable features are left to Cleveland. It is from this place that the Hamlet obtains many of her necessities. There are no coal yards, no lumber yards, no supply houses to litter up her back yard and add a disagreeable side to life. And yet these necessities are obtained as cheaply in Lakewood as in Cleveland.<sup>14</sup>

This supports the findings of Edward L. Thorndike in his study of twenty-four American cities of which Lakewood was one. He said of these suburban communities.

They are in some ways parasitic upon the larger cities which they adjoin for the income of many of their residents, for entertainment of certain sorts, and for higher education, hospitals, and special services. They can keep their own territory free from vice, and still have

convenient opportunities to indulge in heterodox, vulgar, or vicious propensities. Residential suburbs are asylums or retreats for good people to live good lives in, so long as the big city is there too, rather than centers of urban life. On the other hand, they are in some ways supporters and benefactors of the central city. They supply it with much of its professional and managerial talent which enables it to earn its living. They patronize its theatrical, musical and literary ventures.<sup>15</sup>

At this time Lakewood had four grade schools and a high school with a total enrollment of 775 and twenty-four teachers. The town was also well equipped with churches, having two Methodist, an Episcopal, a Congregational, Disciple, Swedenborgian and a Roman Catholic.

On May 4, 1903, Lakewood was incorporated as a village with an approximate population of 3,500. Population growth was so rapid that Lakewood was soon larger than many Ohio cities. On February 17, 1911, it was incorporated as a city.<sup>16</sup> The population had increased over 50%. No city in Greater Cleveland had grown so fast. There was no official city hall. The Police and Fire Departments were completely inadequate. Policemen on bicycles were no match for speeders in Model T Fords.

In 1911 the new Lakewood Chamber of Commerce made headlines when they claimed that they would put the town on a Metropolitan footing.

Their purpose was to take Lakewood with its 16,000 citizens out of its swaddling clothes and put it in the garb of a fullfledged city with a wide awake commercial club. Their activities would be devoted to keeping factories out of the city and eliminating dangerous railroad crossings. They were all for paving every car line and extending west Madison street car lines, establishing boulevards and a sewerage system and using their influence to secure modern fire and police equipment.

City Council, the Chamber of Commerce

and individual citizens were taking their new responsibilities seriously and Lakewood was on its way to becoming a well integrated community. They were proud in those days, just as they are today, of their homes and well-kept lawns, their schools and their churches. However, they bragged about the clean fresh air due to no factories in this growing community, so far from the smoke of Cleveland and they were proud of the fact that they had voted dry and there were no saloons within the city limits.<sup>17</sup>

Lakewood's growth was greatest from 1900 to 1930 when the population increased from 3358 to 70,509. By 1930 Lakewood had reached its capacity in population growth and as a city of homes. Nearly all available land had been utilized. Its character as a suburban community had been established and people began to wonder what the coming years would bring to the city. In 1949, Margaret Butler, in her Lakewood Story, makes some observations about the city's future.

What of the small homes and well kept lawns that have won for the city its reputation? As they get older will they deteriorate to the extent that a less desirable element will move in? Or will the yearning to preserve their city of homes be passed on to the next few generations?.....

Today Lakewood is a good place in which to raise a family. But it will not remain that way by allowing nature to take its course. If we value its good things we must work to preserve them, and we must begin TODAY.<sup>18</sup>

The citizens of Lakewood did not immediately respond to this call to action. Early in 1957, Ralph M. Besse, vice-president of The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, addressed the members of the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce. "His factual, realistic and non-controversial portrayal of the imminency of Lakewood's deterioration in the future, resulted in an immediate and optimistic desire to unite forces for a sustained all-out effort to preserve and save Lakewood." The



Chamber of Commerce and the city administration organized forces. Mayor Frank P. Celeste enlisted the help of a citizens committee of fifty couples to study the problem. Jean Barrett was appointed full time Director of Modernization and Operation Lakewood was begun.

The Operation Lakewood program had many aspects. First on the list came the \$800,000 addition to the public library. The school board backed by 6,000 door bell ringers asked voters for school levies to improve and maintain schools. These bond issues were passed with an average of 70% approval. A new city hall with new quarters for police and fire departments was built. Volunteers raised \$835,000 to build a new joint YM-YWCA. Under this program 13,860 home improvements were made with the value of building permits at a higher level than for any other four year period in the city's history. The average price of homes sold increased \$679 while for Greater Cleveland during the same period the average dropped \$20. Also a good sign, the number of homes sold each year has dropped. In 1956 there were 912 homes sold and in 1960 only 737. The most important part of the Operation has been the rejuvenation of private homes to combat signs of old-age. As will be seen later in this paper the public library has more than shared in this upward trend in the city of Lakewood. 19

## II. THE EARLY HISTORY OF LAKEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The origins of the Lakewood Public Library began in 1915 when the Lakewood Board of Education appointed a committee to explore the possibility of securing a grant from the Carnegie Corporation for a library building. They were successful in securing a grant of \$45,000.<sup>20</sup> Some years earlier the Board had begun putting aside money and by the time of the grant they had accumulated the \$9,728 necessary to purchase the site at the corner of Arthur and Detroit Avenues.<sup>21</sup> Charles W. Hopkinson, architect for the Board of Education, drew up the plans and construction was started in the spring of 1915.

Miss Roena A. Ingham, who had been head of the Carnegie West Branch of the Cleveland Public Library, was appointed librarian. She spent a year working in an empty store selecting, purchasing, and cataloging the original book collection. When the library opened on May 19, 1916 there were 10,069 volumes. During the first year 93,824 books were circulated to 5,340 borrowers.

During the first five years of its history, the Library was governed by the Board of Education through its library committee. As the Library became more active, however, some other form of administration was needed. In 1920 the Ohio General Assembly passed a law which enabled Boards of Education to rid themselves of library administration by appointing Boards of Trustees. In 1921, the Board of Education appointed seven citizens to serve on the library board.<sup>22</sup>

The increase in the use of the Library kept pace with the growth of the community and in less than eight years the building was inadequate. In November 1922, the citizens passed a bond issue for \$150,000 and later an additional \$30,000 for the enlargement of the building. On June 3, 1924, the enlarged building was opened to the public with nearly double capacity.<sup>23</sup>

In 1921, the first branch was opened in a rented dance hall at the corner of Newman and Madison Avenues with Miss Florence

8

Cottrell as librarian. Madison Branch was moved to its own building in Madison Park on land donated by the city in 1929. By this time the Library was operating branches at Lakewood High School, Emerson, Harding, and Horace Mann Junior High Schools, and a number of public and parochial elementary schools. They also had stations at the Lakewood telephone exchange and Lakewood Hospital. Service for shut-ins was started in 1937.

After twenty years of growth in 1936, the Library's book collection stood at 70,000 volumes. In this time the Library had circulated 7,576,936 books. Miss Ingham had served the Library well during this time. With her death Dr. Mary P. Parsons became head librarian about the time which marks the opening of this paper. <sup>24</sup>

### III. THE LIBRARY'S GOVERNMENT AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The form of government of Lakewood Public Library has not changed since 1921 when the Lakewood Board of Education appointed the first seven citizens to the Board of Library Trustees. This action was taken under a law enacted by the Ohio General Assembly in 1920 enabling Boards of Education to appoint trustees to administer the school district libraries.<sup>25</sup>

The "marked stability both in its structure and membership" which Miss Reed recorded in her history of the Library's early years has remained to the present.<sup>26</sup> In 1949, Margaret Butler said that the original form of organization still continued with "the Board of Education, appointing new, or what is more usual reappointing old trustees as their terms expire."<sup>27</sup>

With the start of the period covered by this paper, 1938, Mr. Isaac S. Metcalf, the second President, was in office. He held this office until May 1951 when he moved out of town for business reasons. He was replaced by Mr. Anthony Poss, who had been a member of the board since 1933.<sup>28</sup> The fourth and present President of the Board of Library Trustees, is the only woman ever to hold the position, Mrs. Robert S. Cheheyl. She has been a member of the Board since 1953 and has served as secretary, and chairman of the personnel and decorating committees.<sup>29</sup> The present members of the Board are: Mrs. Robert S. Cheheyl, Frederick M. Asbeck, Mrs. Elden Bolds, Daniel E. Maloney, Mrs. Gilbert D. Nelson, Anthony Poss, and Isaac M. Stickney. Mrs. Ruth Angell serves as clerk-treasurer.<sup>30</sup>

The last five years have been among the most active for the Library and the Board of Trustees. Besides the usual activities of approving personnel, the budget, and formulating of library policy, the Board succeeded in securing a bond issue for \$800,000 for the expansion and remodeling of the main library and the Madison Branch.

In 1959, the Board of Trustees and the Head Librarian participated in an interesting study on library consolidation. Robert D. Leigh in his Public Library in the United States sees this as a coming trend:

The movement for building larger public library systems by consolidation, federation, or voluntary association has centered attention largely on less populous areas. It is equally desirable as a direction for development, however, in metropolitan regions. As we have seen, public library systems which cover the whole metropolitan area exist almost nowhere in the United States. The organization of libraries under municipal corporations here, as in less populous areas, mitigates against complete coverage of the area, and voluntary cooperation to provide an integrated service for the whole metropolis has seldom been carried out. But a pooling of resources in large urban areas has as much promise of economy as in rural regions.<sup>31</sup>

The Metropolitan Service Commission conducted a study of the libraries of Cuyahoga County. A Study Committee of board presidents and librarians was organized to work with the METRO staff. Mr. Poss, President of the Board, and Mrs. Bloom, Head Librarian, were appointed to this committee. The METRO staff made a formal recommendation that the libraries of the county be consolidated. The Study Committee did not concur, however, stating that their information was not sufficient for any conclusions.<sup>32</sup>

The source of support for the Library has also remained constant during this period. In 1934 the Ohio Legislature passed a bill, backed by the late Senator Robert A. Taft, which changed the support of public libraries from real estate taxes to the proceeds of the classified property tax fund or as it is more popularly known the intangibles tax. This tax is distributed by the Cuyahoga County Budget Commission on a county wide basis and it required that libraries receiving support extend their services to all residents of the county.

In accord with this the Trustees voted:

That the benefit of the library services of the Lakewood Public Library shall be extended on equal terms to all the inhabitants of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, excepting to the inhabitants of subdivisions maintaining a public library which is participating in the proceeds of the classified property tax. <sup>33</sup>

In practice, however, the services of the Library have been extended to all residents of the County, regardless of whether or not they lived in an area served by another public library. <sup>34</sup>

In addition to this income, Lakewood citizens passed a bond issue to enlarge and modernize their library buildings. Until 1959 the cost of operating the school libraries was shared by the Board of Education and the Library. Since 1959, in compliance with an Ohio Supreme Court ruling, the cost has been borne entirely by the Board of Education. <sup>35</sup>

#### IV. THE PHYSICAL ORGANIZATION

The most notable development in this period of the Library's history was the completion of the remodeled building in 1955. Long before any concrete action was taken to improve library facilities members of the community began to realize the problems of overcrowding in their library. Much of the credit for this realization on the part of Lakewood's citizens must be given to the editor of the local newspaper, The Lakewood Post. On July 14, 1950, the paper carried the following editorial:

Many of us are apt to take libraries for granted. Time was when membership in a library association constituted a mark of distinction. Later as the endowed free public library idea reached a climax through benefactions of Andrew Carnegie and other practical philanthropists, communities fortunate enough to possess outstanding libraries took understandable pride in these institutions. Civic booster literature was by no means unknown in those days and material of this sort invariably emphasized library facilities when there was justification for doing so.

But as maintenance of adequate libraries through tax funds became an accepted responsibility of progressive communities, there came an understandable tendency on the part of the average citizen to regard his library in much the same way as he regarded other public functioning. He and his neighbors used the public library more and more and were, perhaps, dimly conscious of the fact that the community library was becoming more useful both in its service to him and in the extension of its facilities beyond limits accepted in the days when most public libraries were practical forms of charity. But as good libraries became the rule rather than the exception, citizens in general became less aware of the progress that was being made so consistently.

It was both inevitable and right that the library take its place with other forms of municipal functioning. But it is worthwhile to realize that the public library as we know it today did not just happen. It came about largely through evolution of what may, in all

propriety, be called a science that has the extension of usefulness of the printed word.<sup>36</sup>

The Post continued to give the Library a great deal of publicity, as had always been its policy, and in January 1952, it began a serious printed campaign to secure improved facilities for the Library. The following is a sample of the type of editorials printed at this time.

Despite a loyal, competent staff and a conscientious Board of Trustees it must be increasingly apparent to any objective observer that Lakewood library is failing to realize fully the possibilities inherent in the development of the community. The basic fault, of course, does not rest with personnel...The whole and the short of the matter is that the library urgently needs more room both to make readily available more books and to provide other services which are properly the responsibility of a public library in a community such as Lakewood.....

In the opinion of The Post the future of Lakewood library is a first thing. We think the Board of Trustees should proceed conservatively. But we think members should proceed. With all respect to the earnest trustees who have devoted time and effort to library administration over the years, the fact remains that there must be an ever increasing unrealized potential of service which could and should be rendered by Lakewood library unless essential expansion is definitely charted now and realized as soon as practical.<sup>37</sup>

The Board of Trustees was far from unaware of the problem. It was agreed, however, that it would be advisable to wait to present a bond issue to the citizens of Lakewood until the programs of the Board of Education and Lakewood Hospital were completed and some of their bonds retired.<sup>38</sup> However, there was a great deal of ground work for the Board to do before they would be ready to present a bond issue.

Early in 1953, the building committee, consisting of Isaac M. Stickney, Dr. Peter J. Warren, Mrs. Charles B. DeLano, and Mr. Fred M. Asbeck, began working on plans for a new



building and submitting a bond issue. Mr. Ralph A. Ulveling, Director of the Detroit Public Library and a noted authority on library buildings was employed as a specialist to advise the Board. He made a preliminary survey of the needs of the community and then recommended to the Board the modernizing and enlarging of the present building. He presented detailed plans to be studied before selecting an architect.<sup>39</sup> Stickney, chairman of the building committee, was quoted as saying:

Mr. Ulveling has undertaken to design a layout which would provide an attractive, functional, modern library building, one which would render complete and efficient library service to the community for the next 25 or 30 years. Economy of construction now and of operation and maintenance in the years to come has been kept in mind.

This plan would increase actual floor space by fifty percent and usable space by seventy percent. In May of 1953 the firm of Garfield, Harris, Robinson, and Schafer of Cleveland was engaged as architects.<sup>40</sup> This firm had also planned the University Heights Branch of the Cleveland Heights Public Library, the Law Library at Western Reserve University, and the new wing at the East Cleveland Public Library.<sup>41</sup>

The bond issue received active support from the citizens of Lakewood. It was supported by The Lakewood Post, the League of Women Voters, the Lakewood Women's Club, the PTA, and many other groups interested in civic welfare.<sup>42</sup> A citizens committee, organized to promote the bond issue, sent speakers to various organizations in the community.<sup>43</sup> In November 1953, the citizens passed the \$800,000 bond issue for the expansion and rehabilitation of the Lakewood Public Library by a sixty-six percent majority. This same bond issue was also to cover the future remodeling of the Madison Branch. The final cost of the remodeling of the main branch cost \$625,000. The balance was later used to remodel Madison Branch.<sup>44</sup> The construction contract was awarded to the Sam.W. Emerson Company.

The work began in October and took nearly eighteen months to complete.<sup>45</sup> The building was closed for one month to allow for tearing down the front of the building to permit the addition of the new wing.<sup>46</sup>

When the building reopened, although they were restricted to two-thirds of the former floor space, the staff made every attempt to keep service as usual. The only entrance to the building was a board walk on the Arthur Avenue side of the building. For nearly eighteen months the staff and public mingled with construction workers in the noise and dust.<sup>47</sup>

In July 1955, the Library again closed for one week to move books into the completed new wing which would be used while the old section of the building was being modernized.<sup>48</sup> This modernization of the old building necessitated tearing down of many unnecessary walls and an ornamental staircase.<sup>49</sup> In spite of the hectic conditions in 1955 the Library circulated over 425,000 books.

Open house to celebrate the completed modernization and addition was held January 16 through January 21, 1956. This also marked the Library's fortieth anniversary.<sup>50</sup> The new facilities increased the open shelf space for books from 60,000 volumes to 185,000 volumes.<sup>51</sup> The completed building was quadruple the size of the original Library. Fortunately the old building had relatively simple lines and since the stone used on the new wing was very similar to that of the original it was difficult to distinguish between the old and new sections of the building.<sup>52</sup>

The interior of the new building was decorated and furnished in a very attractive modern style and arranged in the following way.

First floor:

- Adult lounge and part of the adult collection--
- philosophy, psychology, religion,
- sociology, education, economics, travel,
- literature, history, biography, and fiction.

Young People's Room--  
 popular reading collection for high school  
 students and young adults

Boys' and Girls' Room--  
 collection of books for children from pre-  
 school age through the ninth grade

Office of the Children's and Schools' Department--  
 which administers the twelve school branches and  
 the children's rooms at the Main and Madison  
 branches

Circulation Desk

Board Room, Administrative Offices, Adult Education  
 Office, Bindery and Mending rooms.

Second floor:

Reference Room  
 Vertical file  
 Modern magazine racks for current issues and a  
 magazine stack area  
 Order and Catalog Departments  
 Music Listening Room  
 Staff lounge and locker rooms  
 Typing Room  
 for patrons who wish to use their own portable  
 typewriters

Lower level:

Auditorium  
 Meeting Room  
 Small kitchenette 53

The Board of Trustees and the staff are especially proud of the enamel panel by the Cleveland artist, Kenneth F. Bates, in the Roena Ingham Garden Alcove on the first floor. The artist named the panel "Midsummer in Ohio" and described it "as a free form enamel of flowers, ferns, and butterflies indigenous to this region. Measuring 40 x 54 inches, it has been inlaid in wood matching the wood paneling of the alcove."<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Robert S. Chehey1, chairman of the Decorating Committee of the Board of Trustees made the following statement about the libraries interior.

Because Lakewood is a community of homes, we have sought to make the Library's interior a gracious, beautiful and home-like place, as well as a useful center for the people of Lakewood. This enamel is intended to complete the design. We felt

that the choice of the flower theme was an especially happy one since the panel is the center of interest in the memorial alcove which houses the Library's unusual and popular collection of books on gardening."<sup>55</sup>

The Library staff and Board are also proud of their well-kept grounds for which they have received two awards. In 1958, they were given the Industrial Landscape Award for public buildings in a contest sponsored by the Garden Center of Greater Cleveland, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce and The Cleveland News. The Library was the first public building to receive this award since the previous contests had been limited to industrial and office buildings. In recognition of this award a bronze plaque was presented to the Library.<sup>56</sup> Two years later in 1960, the same group presented another award to the Library for the excellence of its landscape maintenance and its well-kept lawn.<sup>57</sup>

As stated previously the bond issue passed in 1953 was also intended to finance the remodelling of the Madison Branch. The remodelled building with an addition which included an auditorium was formally opened in October 1956, although the work was completed earlier in the year.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the main library and its Madison Branch, the Library also operates twelve school libraries in cooperation with the Board of Education. These are located in the three junior high schools and eight elementary schools in Lakewood. A branch is also maintained at Lakewood Hospital to serve the staff and patients at the hospital. The librarian in charge of this service visits the hospital and circulates a book truck two afternoons a week.<sup>59</sup>

## V. THE BOOK COLLECTION

In Building Library Collections, by Carter and Bonk, the authors state that "...the most important job of the librarian [is] the selection of those books which he judges will be best for his library."<sup>60</sup> The quality of this book selection more than the size of the collection determines the usefulness of the library.

Each book examined requires the exercise of careful judgment, integrity, emotional control at times, and scrupulous honesty, guided always by a sense of purpose...In the building of a library's book collection the determination of objectives is the most important fundamental in the selection process. The wisdom and judgment exercised at this point will ultimately determine whether a library five years hence will be little more than a subsidized mediocre book-store following the dictates of the natural popularity of some subjects plus the popularity induced by advertisements of publishers, or will be an instrument in the public educational structure, which provides books that in a meaningful way are beneficial to the community.<sup>61</sup>

The annual report for 1958 quoted part of a report by Mr. Daniel Hagelin, Head of the Reference Department, which stated the goals of book selection for his department. Mrs. Bloom found this report "illustrative of the continuing work that is done on the book collection in all departments."

- I. To maintain as far as funds allow a continuing selection of materials to meet those community needs and desires that are the responsibility of our department and to reflect with some degree of completeness the activities, interests, institutions, and public spirit of Lakewood.
- II. Our aim is not only to meet present needs and demands but to anticipate as far as possible the future demands of our patrons.

- III. To set high intellectual standards for our collections with the purpose of helping raise the general educational level of the community and providing rich fare for the keener minds among the general reading public.
- IV. To achieve and maintain up-to-dateness throughout the collection as far as funds permit.
- V. To maintain a prompt supply of recent publications.<sup>62</sup>

In commenting on the above goals, Mrs. Bloom said:

The goals outlined above have been those of the Reference Department. Objectives vary for each department with the differences in subject material or in age group, but the basic principles are the same. The professional staff of the public library must know the educational and information-using aspects and potentials of the community, must know books and related materials, and must take the responsibility of selecting and organizing from the vast mass of publishing that which is most reliable and most valuable for it.<sup>63</sup>

This is the closest thing I could find to a formal book selection policy ever issued by the administration of the library.

During the period covered by this paper the size of the book collection increased by over 75,000 volumes.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Volumes</u>
1939	83,749
1945	99,579
1947	108,004
1957	140,015
1958	147,023
1959	154,095
1960	160,534

When the library first opened in 1916 there were 10,000 books in the collection. Today there are over 160,000 including the largest reference, art, business, and technology collections on the West side of Greater Cleveland.<sup>65</sup> In addition to the book collection, the library regularly receives five hundred periodicals. At the opening of this period, in 1939, the library

added a limited number of books in Braille and Talking Books for service to the blind.<sup>66</sup>

During the war precaution was taken to protect the records of Lakewood's early history. Photostatic copies of pictures and manuscripts in the Library's historical collection and in City Hall were made to assure their preservation. The original documents were kept in Lakewood and the copies stored in another city.<sup>67</sup> In 1942, Lakewood Public Library was selected as one of 1200 libraries in the United States as a demonstration War Information Center. Each month bulletins, pamphlets, etc. were sent to the Library dealing with various aspects of the war program and civilian defense."<sup>68</sup>

The Library has received numerous gifts. Most of them were small but two of them are especially interesting. In 1941, a collection of books on flowers and gardening were presented to the Library as a memorial to Roena A. Ingham, the first head librarian. The books were purchased with gifts given to a committee appointed by the Board of Trustees to arrange for the memorial. Mrs. Howard A. Byrns, chairman of the committee, said:

"...it is appropriate to the spirit of Miss Ingham's service and influence that this memorial may be kept alive by the continuous support of those who knew her and those who share her interests and enthusiasm."

Gifts were received from former Library staff and board members from as far away as Maine, Florida, California and Hawaii. Gifts came from individuals who were friends of Miss Ingham and the Library and from many civic, religious, educational and recreational groups which had been encouraged by Miss Ingham.<sup>69</sup>

In 1954, the Library received an unusual gift from Mr. George E. Lindstrom, author of the History of Lakewood. He presented the Library with a collection of material on Presidents of the United States and their families which he had spent ten years gathering. The material included a brief biographical sketch

on each president with emphasis on little known facts and an unusual collection of pictures. The Library had the material bound and placed it in the reference room.<sup>70</sup>

A music listening room, which was planned when the new building was designed, was opened to the public in 1958. Two high fidelity record players were installed in an attractively decorated listening room and the collection was opened to anyone who had a library card. Although the collection is still too small to meet all the demands made on it, including those of the music appreciation group meeting at the Library, they eventually hope to have a large enough collection to permit circulation.<sup>70</sup> In 1959, Alfred Dorod presented 277 new classical records to this collection.<sup>71</sup> In 1960, there were 365 music and language albums available for use by the public.<sup>72</sup>



VI. THE ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL

Dr. Mary P. Parsons became head librarian in August 1938, shortly before the beginning of the period covered by this paper. She replaced Miss Roena Ingham, who had been librarian since the Library opened in 1916. Dr. Parsons was a graduate of Smith College and New York State Library School. She had served several years in the reference department of the New York Public Library and had organized and been resident director of the Paris Library School to instruct Europeans in American library methods. She had conducted classes in library instruction at McGill University in Montreal and the University of Michigan.<sup>73</sup>

Under Dr. Parsons the Library structure became more definitely departmentalized. One example of this was in Business-Technology section. Mrs. Elizabeth Ward came to the Library in 1938 to build up the new business-technology. When the reference librarian left in 1943 the two departments were combined and Mrs. Ward became head of Reference, Business and Technology.<sup>74</sup>

During World War II the Library experienced serious problems. In 1943, the County Budget Commission cut the Library's operating funds and the Trustees found it necessary to cut the number of staff hours. They did this by ceasing to fill vacancies left by people resigning to go into war work. This caused a shortage of about 300 hours a week and the library was forced to shorten the number of hours they were open to the public. Mr. I. S. Metcalf, then President of the Board of Trustees, issued a statement to the people of Lakewood.

We cannot cut deeply into a book fund already too small, for a public library cannot justify its existence unless it buys the books the public needs. We cannot cut salaries in the face of rising living costs and growing taxes.

We recognize that practically every service organization in the country has been compelled to retrench in both the scope and quality of its performance but

we are reluctant to take this road. The library will continue to do the best it can for Lakewood and we believe that best will be pretty good. We want Lakewood to understand why it isn't better.<sup>75</sup>

To help relieve the situation the Lakewood branch of the American Women's Voluntary Services enlisted more than twenty-five women to give part time volunteer work to the Library. These women were given a short training program as an introduction to the Library policies and practices by Dr. Parsons. They did work such as mending, paging, secretarial work, filing, and indexing. The AWVS also took over the delivery of library books to shut-ins.<sup>76</sup>

In September 1943, Dr. Parsons was granted a year's leave of absence to take an assignment with the Office of War Information in the South Pacific. The following year she resigned in order to continue working with the Library in Wellington, New Zealand.<sup>77</sup>

When he returned from military service in 1945, Mr. George Grill, who had been secretary-treasurer of the Board of Trustees for twenty-five years, replaced Dr. Parsons as head librarian. His period of service was the shortest of the four head librarians in the history of the Library. In April 1948, he was forced to resign because of ill health.<sup>78</sup> The present head librarian, Mrs. Mary Beeman Bloom, came to Lakewood Public Library as the order librarian in 1940. She had a background in public, high school and the University of Michigan libraries. Later she was appointed assistant librarian and in 1948 she replaced Mr. Grill.<sup>79</sup>

Under Mrs. Bloom the library experienced rapid growth after the construction of the new building. The number of persons on the staff increased 11.8% from 1953 to 1957. During this same period the professional staff increased 9%. With the completion of the new building a new position was created, Head of Adult Education and Public Relations, which will be discussed in greater detail in the section devoted to the Library and the public.<sup>80</sup> In 1960 the staff was as follows:

<u>Staff-professional</u>	<u>full-time</u>	<u>part-time</u>	
head librarian	1		
assistant librarian	1		
head of adult education	1		
order	1		
cataloging	1	1	
reference	4	3	
children's	4	2	
young adult	1		
adult	4	3	
	<u>18</u>	<u>9</u>	
total at main			
schools	7		
Madison branch	2	1	
	<u>27</u>	<u>10</u>	81
total for system			

The young adult department was also created during this period. In 1936 Miss Francis Grim began devoting thirty hours a week to young people's work. In 1949, she was replaced by Miss Jane Ann Ellstrom.<sup>82</sup> This department aims to aid the young adult in recreational reading and in school assignments. The present young adult librarian, Mr. Gene Hatch, meets regularly with the librarian at Lakewood High School to coordinate the facilities of the two libraries.<sup>83</sup>

## VII. THE LIBRARY AND ITS PUBLIC

While the original purpose of libraries may have been merely the collection and preservation of graphic records, public libraries in the United States have added as additional concept to their purpose. This new goal may be paraphrased as follows:

The library aims to become an integral part of the intellectual and cultural life of the community in order to serve as a center of reliable information; stimulate self-education; promote the growth of individuals in their personal lives and as citizens of a democracy; and encourage the creative use of leisure time.

In assuming this role the Library takes on the character of a social institution, defined by Lowell Martin as, "an integrated pattern of human relationships established by the common will and serving some vital human need."<sup>84</sup>

The relationship between the library and the community it serves are extremely difficult to record. Relying entirely on statistics of circulation, registered borrowers and other measurable data ignores the vital human quality which is essential to the relationship. This paper records the statistics and other relevant data and when ever possible I have attempted to show the human factors and the atmosphere of this integration through the use of quotations.

Circulation can registration statistics for the period covered by this paper reveal some interesting trends. Some conclusions can be made from the following samples.

### Number of Registered Borrowers

1939	25,159
1945	18,202
1953	20,260
1957	28,552
1958	31,385
1959	32,097
1960	33,436

Circulation

1939	544,838
1945	385,711
1953	399,258
1955	425,000
1957	520,168
1958	572,566
1959	592,227
1960	613,489

During the first twenty-five years of the history of the Library both circulation and registration showed an upward trend. Registration reached an all time peak in 1938 and circulation reached its peak during 1932 with 610,661 books borrowed.<sup>86</sup> These figures corresponded with the population growth of Lakewood which increased from 41,372 in 1920 to 70,509 in 1930.<sup>87</sup> These figures also followed the trend caused by the depression in libraries all over the country.

This upward trend did not continue. In 1945 circulation reached its lowest point since 1920. Part of this may have been a normal tapering off after the depression, but the war was without doubt another influencing factor. In the Annual Report for 1945, Mr. Grill expresses his feelings about the loss in the number of registered borrowers.

We feel that the loss was due to the fact that so many of the boys and girls were in the armed services and their cards expired and were cleared from our files when the block of numbers was taken up each month.<sup>88</sup>

After the war there was another slight upward curve. But, as the figures from 1953 show, this was small until the completion of the new building which seemed to have a great effect on the interest of the public. In 1955, inspite of the torn-up conditions because of construction the circulation was over 425,000 books. In her Annual Report for 1957, Mrs. Bloom took advantage of her first opportunity to compare statistics in the remodeled building with those of 1953, the last year under normal conditions in the old building.

Registered Borrowers

1953 20,260  
1957 28,552 (These figures do not include borrowers at the school libraries who are not required to register for cards, nor persons who use the library for reference purposes only.)

Circulation

	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>% of increase</u>
Total	399,258	520,168	30.2
Main	231,198	340,776	47.2
Madison	39,907	50,957	27.6

Mrs. Bloom found that Lakewood Public Library compared very well with other libraries in the country during this same period.

In approximately the same four year period the increase in circulation for 117 public libraries all over the country was 18%. The average circulation per capita for those same libraries was 4.71, while in Lakewood the books<sup>89</sup> borrowed averaged 7.6 per capita.

The circulation figure for 1957 represented an average of twenty-two books per family.<sup>90</sup> In the annual report for that year Mrs. Margaret Law, librarian at Madison Branch, made an interesting comment on service to families that applies to the main library as well as the branch.

One of the most satisfying features of this branch is the role that it plays in serving entire families. To see both parents and children leaving the library with armloads of books for everyone is gratifying evidence that library books play an important part in family living and reminds one of the statement of Mrs. Annis Duff, who writes so vividly of the shared reading her family enjoyed. She said, "What we do in the way of exploring and making use of books brings harmony and a feeling of reciprocal enjoyment into our companionship; and to each of us separately a deep delight and a sense of vitality and fulfillment." This opportunity to serve an entire family at once in one of the rewarding features of a suburban library.<sup>91</sup>

In 1960, after five years in the new building, the circulation had passed the peak it reached during the depression. This represented a gain of 53% over 1953 and 24% over 1956. The gain at Madison Branch since 1956 was nearly 40%. The total number of books charged out in the first five years after the modernization of the new building was 2,790,000.<sup>92</sup>

In contrast to the increase in library use during this period the population of Lakewood showed a steady decline.

Population of the City of Lakewood

1930	70,509	
1940	69,056	
1950	68,071	<sup>93</sup>
1960	66,154	<sup>94</sup>

However, this does not necessarily indicate that the citizens of Lakewood were actually using their library more, because there was a great increase in use of the Library by people outside the community. The annual report of 1959 showed the following distribution of registered borrowers at the Main library.

Residence of Borrowers

66.4%	Lakewood
12%	Cleveland
7%	Rocky River
6%	Bay Village
	remainder scattered from other suburbs

In 1954, before the building was modernized and expanded only 10% of the borrowers were from outside Lakewood.

The same report revealed some differences between the Main and Madison Branches. A very small percent of the borrowers at Madison come from outside Lakewood. Also the percent of juvenile borrowers is just reversed at the two libraries. At the Main Library 63% of the borrowers are either adult or young adult. At Madison Branch, 64% of the borrowers are juveniles. The total number of juvenile borrowers for the entire system, including the schools, is 53%.<sup>95</sup>

Statistics can tell a great deal but there are many other factors, much more difficult to measure, which mean even more

in the integration of the library and the community. This area is that of public relations and service. In the Annual Report for 1930, Miss Ingham, stated a policy which has been followed by the library ever since.

...Effort must be made to let the community as a whole know that there is something to interest every man, woman, and child in the modern library.

Every effort was made to keep the public aware of their library through newspapers, book talks, printed book lists, and publicity leaflets. The Lakewood Post has always cooperated with the library. There is rarely a week when this paper does not carry an article or editorial on some phase of the library's activities. The adult department has always given book talks to groups outside the library. In 1958 forty such talks were given and Mrs. Bienstadt, head of the adult department, made the following evaluation:

Perhaps we shall never be able to measure the results of these programs in terms of circulation for the library; but we feel that the good will and friendly relationships established by this activity are of inestimable value.

In 1957, after the new building was completed, a new position was established. Miss Mary Reed was appointed Head of Adult Education and Public Relations.<sup>98</sup> As head of public relations Miss Reed continued to encourage library publicity through newspapers, book lists, and other communication facilities. Miss Reed stated her concept of adult education in the library in the annual report for 1957.

If one of the specific goals of the Library adult education programs is to discover emerging educational needs, then the means used to this end should be flexible, closely related to the participants' needs and somewhat experimental. The informal book centered discussion group, with maximum participation by those enrolled, lends itself very well to these ends. The high intellectual standards obtainable in a small purposeful



of this kind and the reliance on participants and volunteer leaders (a very practical consideration with the Library's limited staff and budget) is also in their favor. For these reasons, during the last two years we have given these groups top priority in our activities and I believe we should continue to do this.

Among the groups which were sponsored at the Library that year were Great Books and World Politics discussion groups; Reading With Your Family in cooperation with the Women's Association of Cleveland College; Reading Skills in cooperation with the Lakewood Board of Education; a course of Latin American led by Mary Hirschfeld; and several groups for senior citizens. The total number of meetings held at the libraries in 1958 was 694, an increase of 47% over 1957.<sup>99</sup> By 1960 the number of meetings held in the auditoriums and meeting room at the Library and at Madison Branch numbered 837. Of these 699 were held at the Main Library.<sup>100</sup> The objectives of this department have been summarized in the Report for 1959.

1. To respond immediately and sensitively to the continuous learning needs and interests of mature people in the community.
2. To stimulate the reading and discussion of significant books to introduce the challenge of different viewpoints, and to encourage reflection and deeper understanding of the major issues of our time.
3. To arouse curiosity and a desire to learn, to enlarge horizons, to introduce new experience, to afford opportunity for the intelligent consideration of personal and social problems, and to encourage the creative use of leisure time.
4. To establish friendly relations with leaders in the community and to aid them in program planning through such resource material as a file of local speakers, local film catalogs, etc.
5. To serve as an information center and referral agency for adult education activities in the Library and in the community.

6. To integrate the Library in the intellectual and cultural life of the community by encouraging the use of its auditorium and meeting rooms for educational, cultural and civic purposes.
7. To make people increasingly aware of the values their Library offers them through news stories, bulletins, etc.
8. To join and work with national groups whose goals may serve to further the educational objectives of the Library.<sup>101</sup>

Many of the goals listed above as those of Adult Education and Public Relations are also goals of the library as a whole. The general reader guidance offered in all departments, reference service, work with children and young adults, cooperation with the Board of Education and other community agencies all contribute to the integration of the library and the community.

The joint administration of the school libraries previously mentioned is a good example of this cooperation. Library instruction classes are held for all public and parochial schools in Lakewood. The Children's and Schools Department also makes classroom loans to all elementary teachers in Lakewood. They also sponsor summer reading programs for elementary children and a pre-school story hour. "May Walks" are an annual for all fourth grades in the public schools. Each class visits the library individually for a tour and an informal talk about books.<sup>102</sup>

Although no longer jointly administered the Library also cooperates with the library at Lakewood High School. Mr. Hatch, the Young Adult Librarian meets regularly with the librarian at the High School to coordinate facilities of their two libraries. The Young Adult department also sponsors a Summer Forum for high school and college age people in cooperation with the Council on World Affairs.

It is evident that Lakewood Public Library takes very seriously its educational purpose in addition to the collection,

preservation, and administering of materials. Robert Leigh's description of the role now played by adult education in public libraries applied to Lakewood:

The public library, then, has not become either a major center of formally organized adult education under its own initiative, nor does it serve as the officially designated library for the existing agencies of formal adult education. Nevertheless, to the extent of its means, in terms of materials and skilled personnel, the libraries provide opportunity for many men and women individually or organized into informal groups to continue their education as adults. In this sense it furnishes the essential library for the host of activities and efforts which have somewhat romantically been called the people's university.<sup>103</sup>

At a later date, in the light of historical perspective, this library will have to be judged, as will all public libraries, by its contribution to society.

In the end, the library's contribution to American society must be measured in terms of its effects and influence upon that society, in terms of its contribution to the gradual transformation of the "great society" into the "good society."<sup>104</sup>

## FOOTNOTES\*

1. Berelson, p.4-5.
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3. Butler, p.5.
4. Lindstrom, p.21.
5. Butler, p.26-27.
6. Historical Research Committee, p.60-61.
7. Butler, p.27.
8. Butler, p.110.
9. Butler, p. 113.
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11. Butler, p. 146.
12. Lindstrom, p.37.
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14. Butler, p. 160.
15. Thorndike, Edward L., Your City, New York, 1939, Harcourt  
Brace and Co., quoted in Reed, p. 37-38.
16. Butler, p.161.
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18. Butler, p.61&63.
19. Lakewood Post, January 16, 1961.
20. Butler, p.194.
21. Lindstrom, p. 103.
22. Butler, p. 194-195.
23. Lindstrom, p. 103.
24. Butler, p. 195.
25. Butler, p. 196.
26. Reed, p. 22.
27. Butler, p. 195.
28. Lakewood Post, May 22, 1951.

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35. Lakewood Post, February 16, 1961.
36. Lakewood Post, July 14, 1950.
37. Lakewood Post, January 4, 1952.
38. Conrad, p. 9.
39. Lakewood Post, April 17, 1955.
40. Lakewood Post, May 22, 1953.
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42. Lakewood Post, August 12, 1953.
43. Lakewood Post, October 9, 1953.
44. Cleveland Plain Dealer, January 12, 1956.
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46. Cleveland Press, August, 10, 1954.
47. Lakewood Post, September 23, 1954.
48. Lakewood Post, July 7, 1955.
49. Cleveland News, March 22, 1955.
50. Lakewood Post, January 5, 1956.
51. Cleveland News, March 22, 1955.
52. Conrad, p. 10.
53. This is your Lakewood Public Library.
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55. Lakewood Post, October 18, 1956.
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70. West Side News, February 11, 1954.
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94. U.S. Almanac, 1960.
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