

First Movement To Establish Library Began 58 Years Ago

The first movement for a Public Library in Merrill was in the year 1886, when Mayor Thielman called a meeting for the purpose of considering the establishing of a library.

The first Board of Trustees were as follows: President, E. L. Bump; Vice President, L. N. Anson; Secretary, W. H. Cannon; J. N. Cotter, M. H. McCord, A. H. Stange, W. A. Scott, H. R. Fehland and H. H. Curtis. The first library was in the City Hall.

At a special meeting of the Board on Feb. 22, 1889, T. B. Scott informed the trustees that \$10,000 was left the library in his father's will. At this time the name was changed to the T. B. Scott Free Library.

On January 6, 1891, Janet Russell was elected librarian at a salary of \$25 a month. Library hours were 2 to 5 and 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Miss Russell's first yearly report showed a circulation of 19,020. In 1902, owing to the crowded adult accommodations, a special children's room was inaugurated. Due to illness, Miss Russell resigned in 1904.

Times were changing in the library world and no longer was an untrained librarian advisable. Miss Helen Price, graduate of an Illinois library school, was hired and began her work in January, 1905. She was a faithful worker and had the true library vision. It was Miss Price who set on foot the movement for a new library building and after much work a donation of \$17,500 was obtained from the Carnegie Foundation. The present library building was open for circulation to the public in 1907.

At the resignation of Miss Price in 1908, Katherine Barker was hired. Following came Miss Bailey, Elizabeth Burke, Edna D. Orr and the present librarian, Nathalie H. Scribner.

The circulation for 1946 was 147,985.

In 1945, the famous radio commentator, H. V. Kaltenborn, donated \$2,000 to the library to establish a fund for the purchase of books, stating that he was making the donation in appreciation of the good he had received from the library when he was a youth in Merrill.

Ran Blacksmith Shop In Merrill Half Century Ago

Gerhardt Krueger is another Merrill old timer. He was born in Germany October 19, 1872 and came to America, to Merrill, in 1882 when he was ten years old.

He was in the blacksmith business at a place located on East Main street between the present Francis Fox residence and the Co-op property. He was in business with Fred Kunkel for 15 years. Mr. Kunkel was the father of Ewald Kunkel and Mrs. Margaret Ristan. When Mr. Kunkel died, Albert Drollinger came in to the business with Mr. Krueger, and was with him 12 years.

They did general blacksmithing, made sled runners, did horseshoeing, made logging tools, and built sleds and wagons.

Mr. Krueger was 26 years old when he entered the blacksmith business in 1898. He retired in 1925.

After retiring from the blacksmith business he worked for George Gilkey and later at the Anson & Gilkey Co. factory. He retired permanently several years ago.

He is now 75 years old and makes his home with his daughter, Mrs. John Klokke, 1704 East Main street.

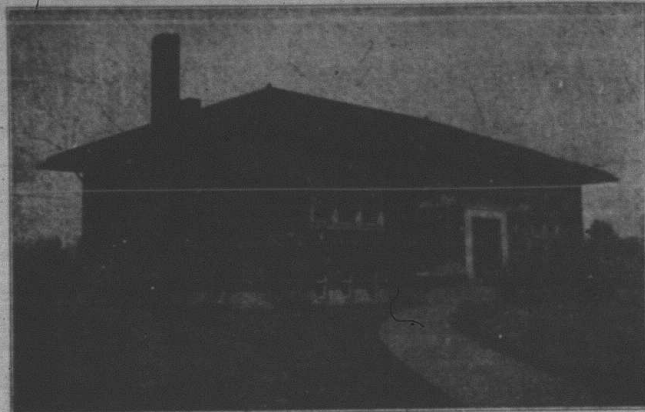
Merrill's First Movie

The first motion picture shown in Merrill was "The Great Train Robbery," a hair-raising thriller. It was shown in a tent on the midway at the Lincoln Fair. We don't recall the date, but we remember the picture. We can still see the beautiful white horse, with the train robber on his back, crossing the creek. We marvelled at how natural everything was, even to the splashing of the horse's feet in the creek.

High Wheeler

It does not seem so many years ago that we saw George A. Foster, who was bookkeeper for the T. B. Scott Lumber company, and later a lumberman at Wausau and Mellen, ride on one of the old time bicycles down the sidewalk of Merrill. The bicycle had one large wheel in front and a little one in back.

W. R. Bryan founded the pioneer grain, flour and feed station in this territory in 1896, the Merrill Elevator.



THE T. B. SCOTT FREE LIBRARY

Railroad Siding To High School

Many of Merrill's oldtimers will remember the railroad siding that served the old Central Manufacturing Co., which was located where the High school now stands.

This siding started south of the present railroad station and curved northwest, and then straight west to the west side of Polk street, running just north of the Hansen Glove Co. and south of the H. Harris store.

For many years after the Central Mfg. Co. plant burned, Hans Harris loaded scrap iron on to cars directly back of his store.

Fine Coasting On Hathaway Hill

The youngsters and oldsters really had fun in the winter before the advent of the automobile. They would coast down Hathaway hill with sleds and rippers on W. Third st., W. Fourth st. and Prospect st. They could even get good long rides down State and Cottage streets. Except for an occasional horse-drawn sled, there was no interference.

Early Teachers

According to Fred W. Braun, who attended Merrill High School seventy years ago, the first regular faculty included M. C. Porter, principal, Miss St. Clair, assistant, and Mrs. Alex Empey.

MERRILL'S CENTENNIAL Observance



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