



The 200-Year History of Worthington Libraries

1803-2003

*Worthington
Public Library*

· Founded · 1803 ·

by Lisa D. Fuller

Introduction by Meribah A. Mansfield

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Worthington Libraries
820 High Street
Worthington, Ohio 43085



Above: The interior of the James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building at 752 High Street prior to its 1956 expansion. The portrait of Worthington founder James Kilbourne can be seen above the fireplace. This building was donated to the Library by Kilbourne's granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth Jones Deshler.

Dedication

To the people of Worthington,
who have shown their support
for library service in countless
ways for 200 years.

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Above: The James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building at 752 High Street after its final expansion in 1956. This building served as the Worthington Public Library until 1979. Although the north wing is not entirely visible in this photo, this is what the former library building looks like today.

Introduction

It is an honor to be the director of Worthington Libraries, which was the third library to be established in Ohio and the first in central Ohio. I've been interested in writing the history of our beloved library ever since I came here as director in 1991.

There are indelible marks of those who came before us everywhere in Worthington, from historical homes and churches, to the Village Green. What makes the Library story so much a part of the Worthington story is that it began at the same time the community was settled.

The community of Worthington was planned before its settlers left New England. They decided that their new home in the Ohio wilderness would be founded on the values of religion, formal education and lifelong learning. Part of their frontier dream was to have a library.

Prior to their arduous trip to Ohio, the Scioto Company pioneers each contributed money toward the purchase of books, and these were among the few precious possessions they carried with them. At their first town meeting held in December 1803, two months after they arrived to found Worthington, they passed resolutions to establish a library.

It touches me deeply to know that the Library was a priority for our founders in the midst of clearing land, building homes and storing food for the winter. We don't have a record of the titles in that original library collection, but we can imagine their valued books bringing the settlers much pleasure and enlightenment.

The Library has been an important part of the Worthington community for the past 200 years. Its history mirrors the development of American public libraries, from subscription libraries, to support from ladies' clubs, and on to the tax-supported institutions that we are familiar with today.

The people of Worthington have cared for and supported their library throughout the years, as long as the library board and staff have stayed in touch with the needs of the community. Wouldn't the settlers be proud and surprised to see that today's library serves more than 58,000 residents of the Worthington school district? They would be pleased to see a thriving library whose mission is the same today as it was when they established the first library: "to encourage lifelong learning within the community by providing exemplary services and promoting equal access to information."

They would be astonished to know we have access to nearly four million items, through resource sharing agreements with area libraries.

Worthington Libraries has a long tradition of cooperating with other libraries, and with community organizations such as the city, the schools and the Chamber of Commerce.

Today's modern library system strives to provide quality service, and to be future-oriented. Most of all, the library board and staff focus on communication, both internal and external. Two-way communication keeps us in touch with the library's most valuable resource, its staff, and with the needs of its residents. Though I have seen many changes in how our library provides service over the past 12 years, I know that this period has been only a small part of the proud history of Worthington Libraries.

The library board of trustees, the library staff and I are all dedicated to identifying the changing library service needs of our community, and to seeking financial and other resources to meet those needs. It is the least we can do to honor all of those who worked so hard to support the Library over the past 200 years.

Many thanks to Lisa Fuller for researching and writing the fascinating history of Worthington Libraries. Thanks, too, to the Friends of Worthington Libraries for publishing this book. And last, but not least, thanks to our loyal patrons for making the Library the thriving community center of lifelong learning it is today.

—*Meribah A. Mansfield*

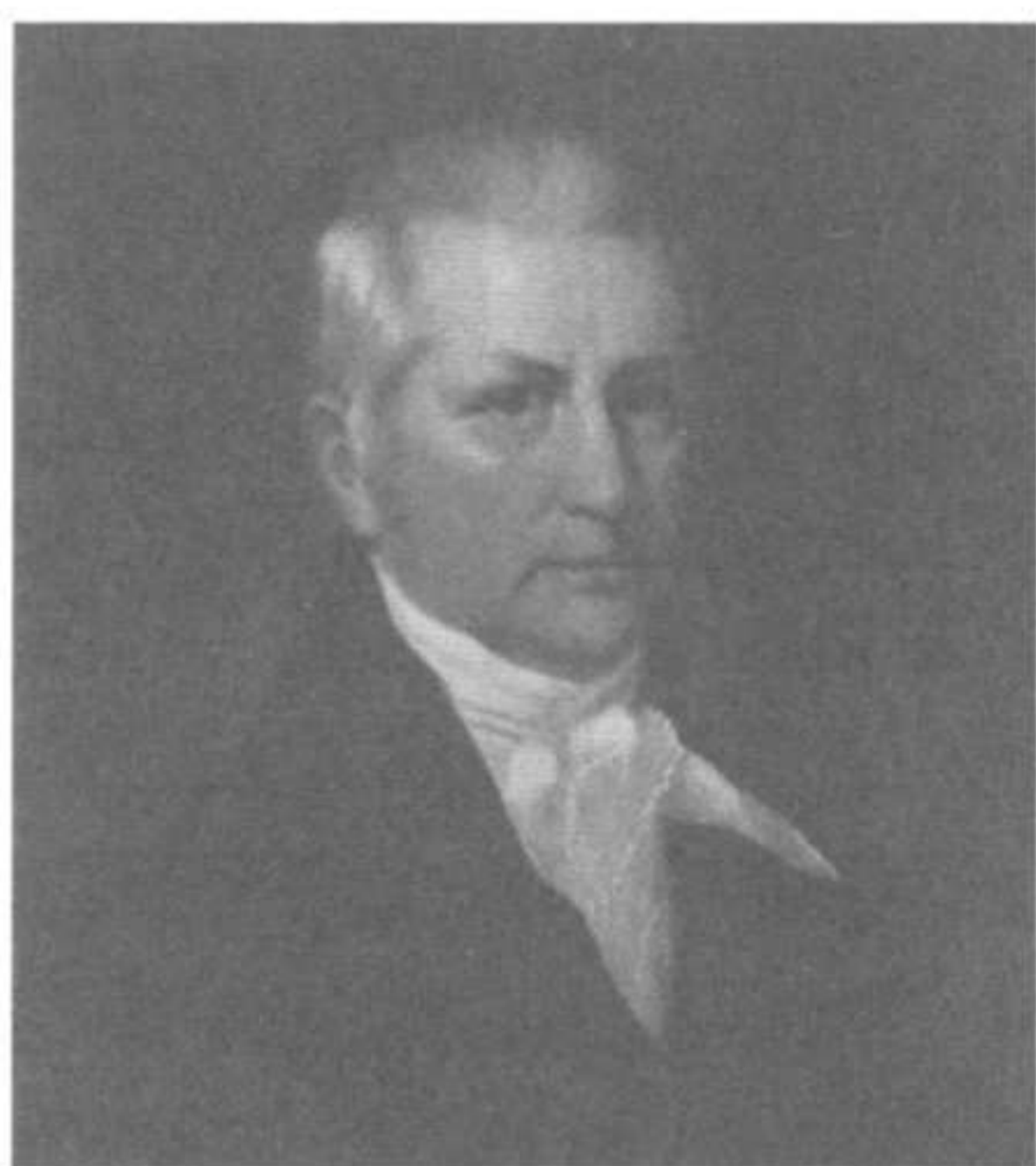
About the author: Lisa Fuller has served as community relations coordinator for Worthington Libraries since 1999. She researched the library's history for more than a year before writing this book. Aside from the first chapter, the information and facts contained here were taken directly from the library's archive of annual reports, press clippings and meeting minutes of the Board of Trustees.

Chapter One

1803-1899

The Early History of Worthington Libraries

"If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need."
—Cicero



James Kilbourne (1770-1850) was an early champion of library service in Worthington.

Library service in Worthington, Ohio actually has its roots in Granby, Connecticut as the books for the first Worthington library were brought by the Scioto Company, the city's first settlers, from Granby in 1803.

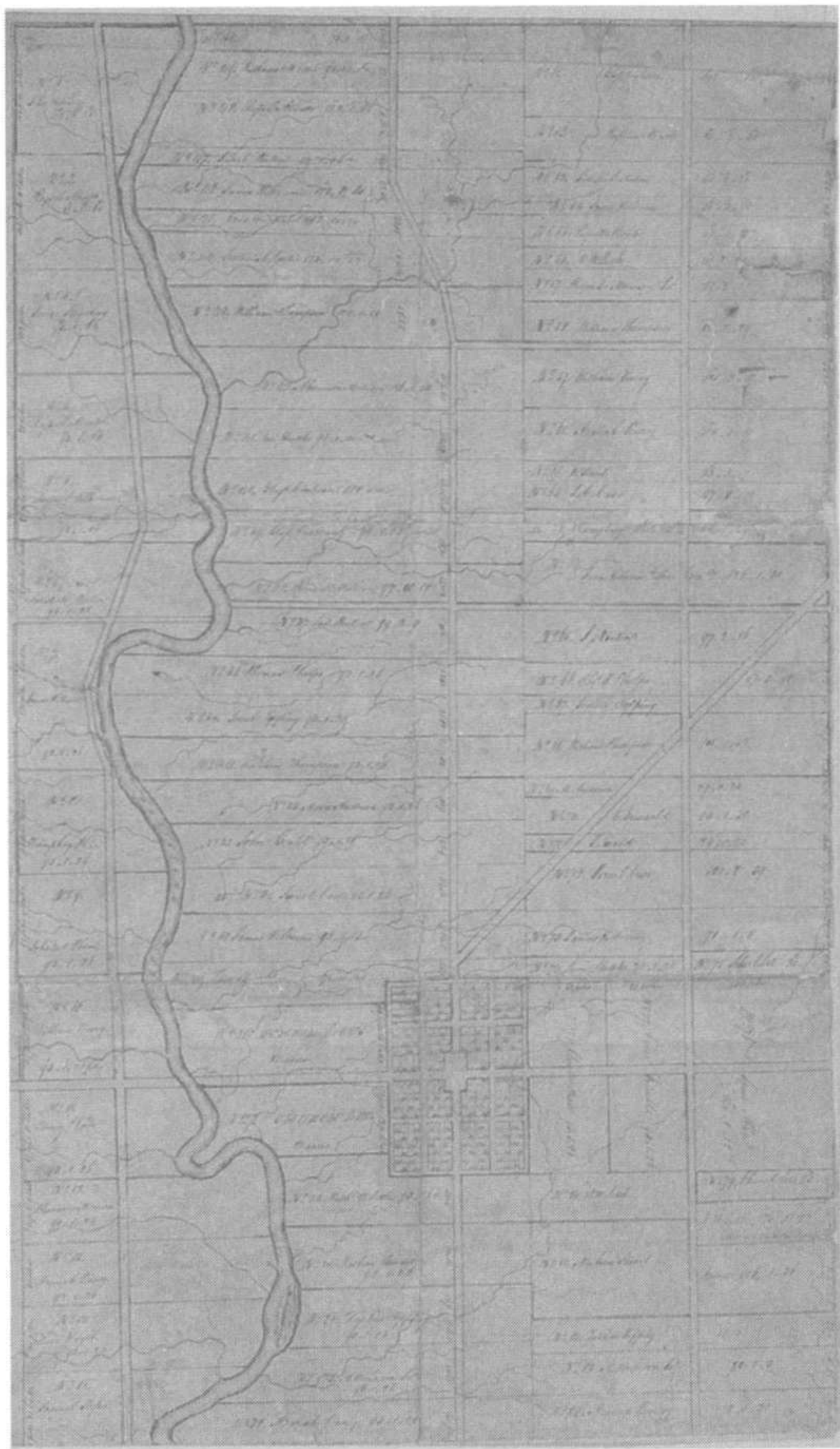
James Kilbourne (b. 1770), leader of the Scioto Company, was most likely the prime instigator behind establishing a library in Worthington. A successful storeowner in Connecticut, Kilbourne was very involved in his community, serving as town assessor and actively participating in the Masonic Lodge, Episcopal Church and Granby subscription library.

In 1800, Kilbourne became interested in moving west and traveled to the Genesee River Valley region of New York State to explore settlement possibilities. When he discovered this land to be either already inhabited or too expensive, he began to investigate settlement sites along the Ohio River.

On May 5, 1802, Kilbourne met with a small group of men at the home of Rev. Eber B. Clark to discuss possible plans for resettling in Ohio. They decided that Kilbourne, accompanied by Nathaniel Little, should make an exploratory journey to Ohio to scout out possible settlement sites. They left on July 30 and returned in late September, having made the arduous 2,000-mile journey in only eight weeks.

On October 5, Kilbourne and Little presented their findings to the group gathered at Rev. Clark's home. This group of men formed the Scioto Company and, based on Kilbourne's presentation, agreed to purchase a tract of land north of Franklinton, Ohio on the banks of the

Below: This map was drawn based on James Kilbourne's survey of the area. It is dated August 11, 1804. The Village Green, home of the first library in Worthington, is visible on the lower portion.



Whetstone River. Their purchase was finalized in December, and Scioto Company members and their families spent the next several months preparing for their journey.

The company met for the last time in the east on August 10 and 11 and agreed to call their new town Worthington, after Thomas Worthington, the father of Ohio Statehood (Kilbourne and Little met him on their exploratory journey). They also discussed their subscription library.

It was agreed that “two Dollars be Appropriated out of the fund to Each Subscriber for a Library.” This is a significant amount given the average monthly wage of a Scioto Company worker was \$12 per month. James Kilbourne and Levi Buttles were appointed as a committee to

purchase books, and on September 2, the treasurer turned over \$59.86 to the library committee. There is every reason to believe the first library in Worthington was well-stocked given this amount of money and the fact that books sold for between 20 and 30 cents at the time.

Although the families of the Scioto Company began their journeys west at different times throughout the fall, all had arrived safely by December 1, 1803 (including Lucy Fitch Kilbourne, wife of James, who gave birth to a daughter along the way!).

Shortly after their arrival, on December 14, they held a town meeting to discuss the rules for the subscription library. William Thompson, Ezra Griswold, Samuel Beach, Nathan Stewart and Josiah Topping were appointed as the library committee. Zophar Topping was chosen to "Keep & take Care of the Library Belonging to this Company." James Kilbourne and Ezra Griswold were designated to purchase books, and Nathaniel Little to be the "Auditor of Accounts for sd Library." A meeting was set for four o'clock on Monday, December 19, for the "Making of by Laws & Drawing Books." The bylaws were as follows:

Artickle 1st.

There shall be four Library meetings in each year which shall be on the 1st Wednesday of the months of September, December, March and June at one o'clock in the afternoon and the 1st Wednesday of each year shall be the annual meeting of the proprietors of said Library on which day the necessary officers for the ensuing year shall be appointed and the mode of appointment shall be the majority of votes of the members present, given in ballot till otherwise ordered.

Artickle 2nd.*

And the Library shall always be kept in Worthington and each proprietor shall have a right to draw two volumes whenever there are books enough for those proprietors who shall call or send for books on Library meeting days before the meeting is closed but if there are not books enough for that purpose, then each proprietor shall draw but one volume and the book at the time of the draw shall always be put up to the highest bidder and the money bid to be paid down if required by the meeting and no proprietor shall draw any books at any time without bidding or paying at least two cents for the benefit of the Library.

*This article was amended to include: When books are to be drawn out of the Library they shall always be put up to the highest bidder but no person shall have right to draw any book from the Library until he shall pay all fines which the Committee have charged him with and otherwise complied with all the regulations of the Library.

Article 3rd.

Every person who shall not return his book or books by the time they are called for the 2nd time on any Library meeting day shall pay a fine of ten cents and on the days of the annual meeting, a fine of 17 cents and shall pay one cent per day for each book till the same be returned or declared to be lost and if lost shall pay twice the value of the book lost and be obliged to buy at their full value all the other volumes of the set to which shall not be presented at the 2nd call, with a piece of paper containing the person's name fairly written who drew it out of the Library shall be considered as not returned and the fines collected accordingly and every proprietor who shall lend a book belonging to the Library to any person who is not a proprietor, shall pay a fine of 12 1/2 cents and all damages which shall be done to any book while in the care of any person shall be examined by the Committee of Trustees of the Library and the proprietor in whose hands the book suffered change, shall pay such fine or fines as the Committee or Trustees shall assess.

These bylaws were signed on December 23, 1803.

A system of putting books up for bid is very different than what is employed by today's public library. Frontier life necessitated a subscription library if there was to be any library at all. The fact that the Scioto Company was so obviously concerned with how their library would operate illustrates their commitment to education and cultural exchange.

James Kilbourne later wrote to Thomas Worthington proclaiming, "We have laid a foundation (as I trust) for a flourishing Library. Dr. Stanbery of N. York has made a handsome present to it." Dr. Stanbery's gift was so significant that the first Worthington library was named the Stanbery Library in his honor.

At the first Christmas celebration in Worthington, a series of toasts captured the community's good spirits. Two of them mentioned the Library:

4. The Literary Institutions of the Scioto Company, May the same spirit which excited us to make the public appropriations still animate our endeavours, till the wilderness so given, becomes a fruitful field yielding a rich revenue & may youth become Patrons of knowledge and virtue.

7. Doct. Jonas Stanbery, the Liberal Patron of our Library.

Unfortunately, there is no list of volumes held in the Stanbery Library's collection, nor is there any record of how long the library remained in existence. It can be safely assumed, given the evidence, that these books were among the Scioto Company's prized possessions and

helped them pass time during long winter nights on the frontier. There are indications from James Kilbourne's writings that some form of library service remained in Worthington after the demise of the subscription library.

Throughout the 1820s and 30s, Worthington offered several learning opportunities for adults, including a thriving literary society. This led to an attempt to establish a Worthington College. Money for the college was collected beginning in 1819 and building commitments included a resolution to improve the library. Orris Parrish pledged \$5 "for books of history and poetry of standard authors," and Chester Griswold contributed "Hinnes History of England," a 12-volume work valued at \$36. An economic depression, however, made construction of the Worthington College impossible.

In 1839, James Kilbourne, now a state senator, introduced a bill in the Ohio Legislature to establish a body politic known as the Worthington Literati to support a library and lyceum in the town of Worthington. Although this legislation passed, no additional record of the Worthington Literati can be found.

From 1854 to 1860, the Library was sponsored by the school board and volumes circulated through the individual schools.

Following the Civil War, about 1870, a People's Library issued by Harper Brothers Publishing and containing about 200 volumes was placed in the post office where books were issued by the postmaster, F. W. Bishop. Upon his retirement, the books were given to the school library.

In 1897, a group of women studying American history (who would later switch to Shakespeare and rename themselves the Fortnightly Club) felt the need for a library because they lacked adequate reference books. In 1898, they organized and opened "The Worthington Reading Room Association" to great fanfare. Dr. James Canfield, president of The Ohio State University, gave the dedication address. Unfortunately, the reading room was only open for one year before it began to flounder due to lack of financial support.

The people of Worthington, however, were not to be denied library service.

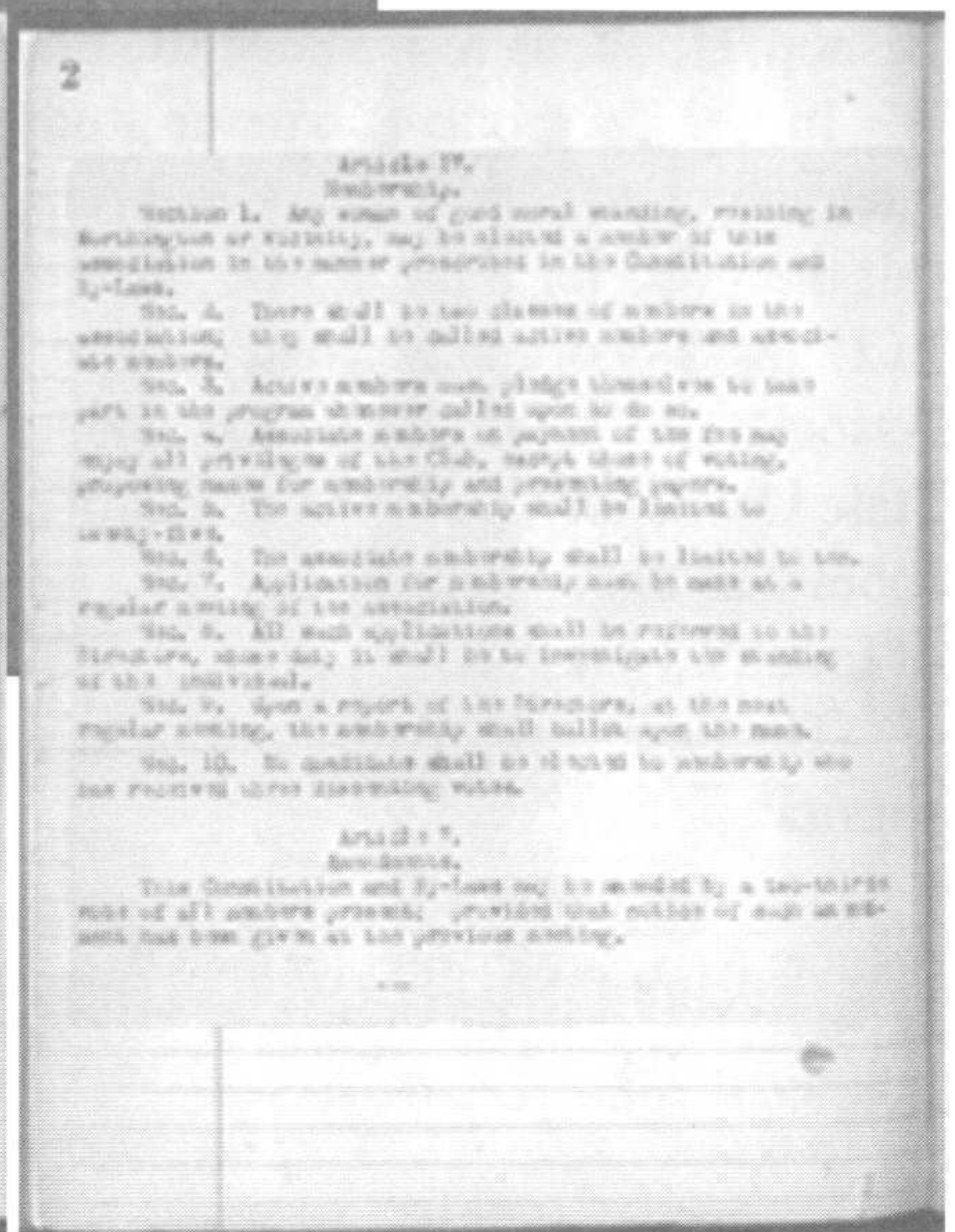
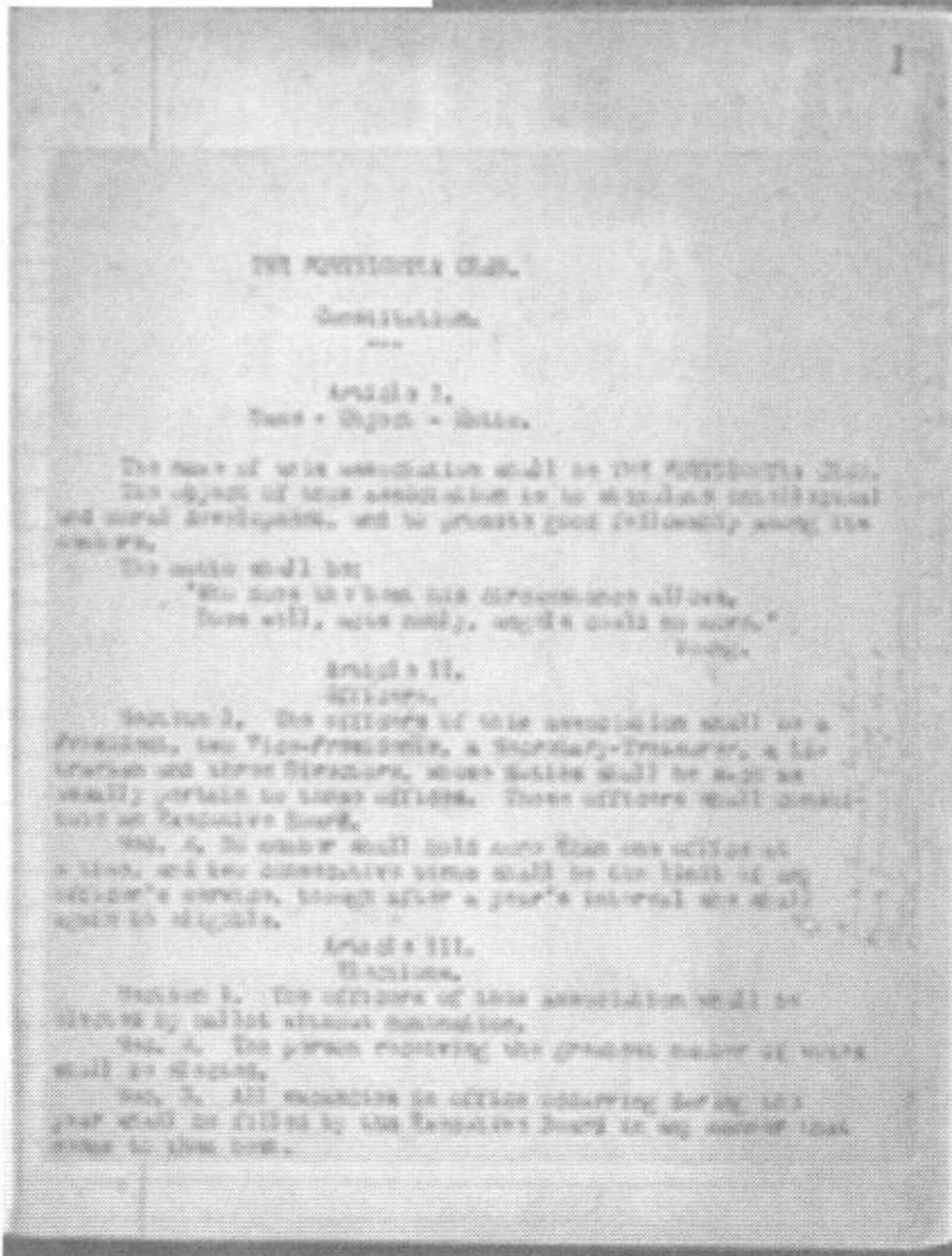
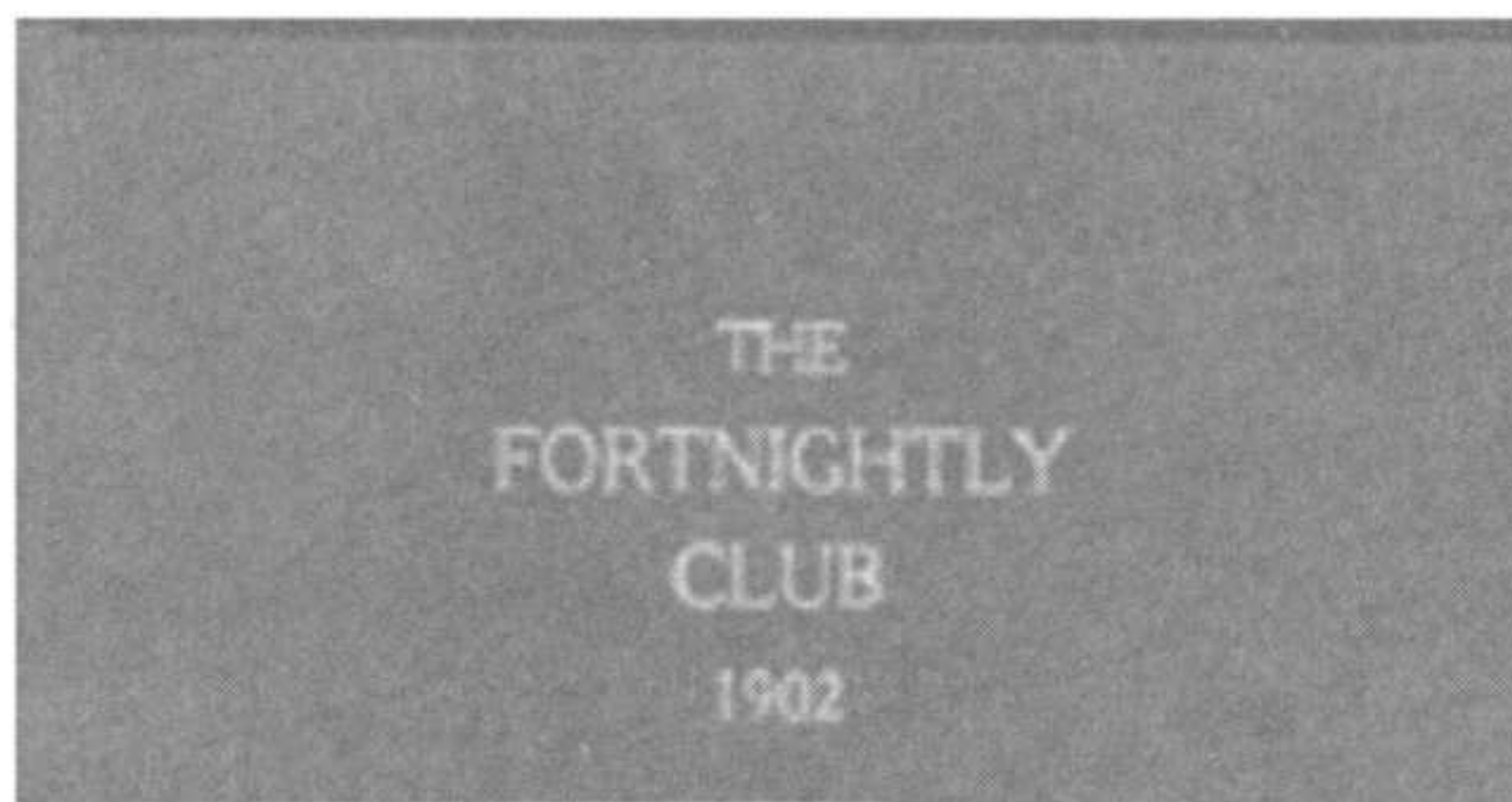
Source: *New Englanders on the Ohio Frontier: Migration and Settlement of Worthington, Ohio* by Virginia E. McCormick and Robert W. McCormick. The Kent State University Press, 1998.



Above left: Miss Helen B. Robinson, a member of the Fortnightly Club, who taught at Worthington High School and later became Principal of Schools. Her sister, Grace Robinson, served as head librarian from 1908 until her death in 1914.

Above right: An unidentified group in front of The Hotel Central circa 1900. The hotel, now known as The Worthington Inn, served as meeting place for the Fortnightly Club. It is Worthington's only remaining 19th-century inn.

Below: The front cover of the The Fortnightly Club minutes book and the typewritten constitution of the Club. The rest of the book is written in longhand. A full transcript of the minutes book is available at Worthington Memory, www.worthingtonmemory.org.



Chapter Two

The Fortnightly Club

—
1902-1908

*"My library,
Was Dukedom large enough."*

—William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

In the early 20th century, the Library received support from the Fortnightly Club, a women's Shakespeare study club. The minutes of the Club are held by Worthington Libraries and offer detailed accounts of what transpired at each meeting, the first of which was held on January 15, 1902.

The mission of the club was "to stimulate intellectual and moral development and to promote good fellowship among its members." Its motto was: "Who does the best his circumstances allows, does well, and acts nobly; angels could do no more."

In the beginning, the Fortnightly Club supported the Worthington Reading Room and Library, but refused to take on full responsibility for its operation. Club members preferred instead to host special events to benefit the Library. The first of these was held on February 14, 1902 in the home of Mrs. Bessie Herrman, a club member. An account of the event reports that her home was lit by a number of candles and those working were dressed in costumes "as if they had walked out of an old picture." This event raised \$25 for the Library with the club voting to make a small remembrance to the maid who answered the door.

Each meeting of the Fortnightly Club began with a reading of Shakespeare. The group concentrated on one play (the first was *Macbeth*) for several weeks and supplemented their reading with reviews, scholarly letters and history presentations. At the conclusion of their Shakespeare discussion, they would have a brief business meeting which included making decisions for the Library, such as the length of a loan period, but remained reluctant to manage the organization.

In June 1902, "The Secretary was ordered to report to the Board of Control of the Library the Club's decision not to assume entire management of the Library." Later that month, representatives of the library

board attended a meeting of the Fortnightly Club to further pursue the issue. "A committee of three representing the Worthington Reading Room spoke on behalf of the library, asking if the ladies would not be willing to take the management of it. They reported the library in debt, about \$45. This, or at least a part of it, they would try to liquidate." The library committee failed to sway club members who only agreed to appoint their own committee "to confer with the people and to agitate the question of carrying on the reading room."

In August, this same sentiment was reiterated when the issue of the Library was raised. "It was concluded that nothing more could be done by the Fortnightly until some action had been taken by the Board of Control in regard to finding new quarters. The Secretary was instructed to address a letter to the Board stating that the ladies stood ready to establish their exchange, whenever the Board should be prepared to reopen the library."

A year later, this changed. Although there is nothing in the Club minutes that explains their willingness to finally take on management of the Library, on November 11, 1903, "Mrs. McCullough moved that Mrs. Ward be a committee of one to secure the room formerly occupied by Squire Miller for a reading room and to interview the Board of Control to ascertain whether they are willing for the Fortnightly Club to assume control of the library."

It seemed the Board was more than willing. Nine days later, on November 20, Mrs. Ward "moved that room on the south side of the Kilbourne Building had been secured at \$3.00 per month, to be used as library and reading room and also that the control of the books had been granted." They wasted no time in clearing the room to prepare it for the Library and formed a committee to solicit subscriptions for its maintenance. On December 3, it was reported that a donation of \$25 was received from Mrs. William Deshler of Columbus (the Deshler family would play an important role in the Library in the years to come).

On December 30, the Fortnightly Club hired Mrs. B. C. McCullough, a club member, to "take charge of the library four afternoons each week for two dollars per week." The only other employee was a boy hired to keep the coal box full.

On January 7, 1904, a public reception was held to commemorate the opening of the Library. Those who attended were invited "to donate good superfluous books from their private libraries."

The women of the Fortnightly Cub worked hard and raised money through lectures, plays, markets and individual memberships. The cultural

interests of the group were many and varied. In April, the Club moved that "Mrs. Parsons be empowered to write her friend, Mrs. Wilson, inviting her to give a talk on Japan for the benefit of our library." This program was scheduled in conjunction with an informal tea where a silver offering was requested.

In December 1904, the Club held a Bazaar for the benefit of the Library which netted \$170, making it their most successful event. The planning for this event included committees devoted to toys, dolls, candy, popcorn and a fish pond. In addition, subscriptions were sold to *Ladies Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post*.

By 1905, the book collection numbered 819 volumes and circulation from October 1904 to July 1905 totaled 3,374. Remaining true to their original purpose, the group continued to read Shakespeare at the beginning of each meeting before concentrating on library issues.

One of their more pressing concerns was the need for space as the Library had already outgrown its room. The committee charged with finding new space reported that the room "over Mr. Leasure's Drug Store can be secured for reasonable terms." It would seem the terms were very reasonable as their first meeting in January 1906 took place in those "bright new quarters."

Mrs. McCullough noted in her annual report of 1906 that "nearly every family in Worthington draws books from the library as well as the people of Elmwood and the surrounding county." Mrs. McCullough also reported that no books were lost this year, the largest one day circulation was 50 books and the Library was regularly sending church papers to the "colored church." The Library received donations of books and magazines from individuals, local reading groups and other organizations, such as the Ohio Archeological and Historical Society.

Although the Library was very successful, the Club and its volunteers were responsible for almost all of the work, from fundraising to book repair. In March 1906, they took it upon themselves to mend library books "equipped with big aprons, paste pots and unlimited quantities of 'E Pluribus Unum' eleven hard working women wrestled with broken backed and otherwise mutilated books, and came off conquerous."

In 1907, the Club received a written request from the Educational Committee of the Worthington Men's Club that the Library be open additional days and hours. To that end, the Men's Club helped the Fortnightly Club secure \$222 in contributions to offset the cost of the additional hours.

It was clear the women of the Fortnightly Club took their commit-

ment of managing the Library very seriously, but it was a tremendous burden for a group of volunteers. They began to have difficulty meeting the demand for service and the increasing financial responsibility on their own.

At a meeting of the Club held on January 8, 1908, "the matter of incorporating the Library was brought up and discussed and it was decided to take immediate steps to that end, in order to be prepared to handle the tax funds."

Under the State Library Law of 1892, officials of any unincorporated village had the power "...to establish and maintain a public library and reading room, and for such purpose may annually levy...a tax not exceeding one and one-half mills on the dollar of the taxable property of such...village, to constitute a library fund." The majority of these tax funds would come from Sharon Township, and the Club initially decided to incorporate under the name "The Sharon Township Public Library Association," but amended that decision at their next meeting, electing instead to use the name "Worthington Public Library Association."

The process to incorporate went smoothly and the articles were included in the March 4, 1908 meeting minutes as follows:

"Whereas there has been formed in Worthington, The Worthington Public Library Association, for the purpose of maintaining a free library for the citizens thereof, therefore, be it resolved by the Fortnightly Club that it sell, transfer and assign all its rights, title and interest in and to the Library now maintained by this Club, including all books, fixtures, lease, and all other property pertaining to the said Library, to The Worthington Public Library Association, its successors and assigns."

All 25 members of the Fortnightly Club were asked to be part of the library association and continued to play an active role in the library's development.

The last entry in the Fortnightly Club meeting book was made on January 27, 1909 and concludes with an announcement that the first annual meeting of the library association would be held the evening of February 22, "where trustees for the ensuing year are to be elected."

Although they only managed the Library for a brief time, it's reasonable to conclude there would not have been a library in early 20th century Worthington if not for the women of the Fortnightly Club. As volunteers, they managed every aspect of modern library service and read most of Shakespeare's work in the process.

Chapter Three

The Worthington Public Library Association

—
1908-1925

“Nothing sickens me more than the closed door of a library.”

—Barbara Tuchman

The Worthington Public Library Association went to work immediately, holding their first meeting soon after their incorporation in March 1908. Mrs. Mary Welling and Mrs. Daisy Ricketts, both members of the Fortnightly Club, were among the first trustees.

The rules for the Library were established at their next meeting, held on April 15. The library hours were set as 1:30 pm-4 pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, with Saturday evening hours from 6:30 pm-9 pm. The Board also decided to pursue the installation of a card system and agreed to pay the librarian \$2.50 per week and the janitor \$1 per month.

Later in 1908, Mrs. McCullough resigned from her position as librarian and was replaced by Miss Grace Robinson.

The primary reason the Fortnightly Club moved to incorporate the Library Association was to be “prepared to handle the tax funds.” The Library began to receive tax funds from Sharon Township in 1908 with \$216.74 received in June. In January 1909, the association minutes record, “The tax levy was discussed at some length and Mr. Nelson (the treasurer) advised that a full report of the Library work and finances be prepared and sent to the Board of Thp (Township) Trustees for their next regular meeting.”

This is the first indication of the Library receiving tax support (a full 16 years before it was established as a school district library), and receipt of tax monies from Sharon Township and the Village of Worthington continued to be reported by the library treasurer on a regular basis. Although a sum of \$200 received a few times per year may seem a trivial amount, it actually represented the bulk of the library’s annual budget which was around \$800 at this time.

The library board also made its first attempt in 1909 to contact Andrew Carnegie about a possible library in Worthington. Mr. Carnegie responded in April with a letter stating he “did not think it worthwhile to



Above: The Welling family, circa 1910, in front of the home of Dr. David Welling. Mary Welling, a member of the Fortnightly Club and trustee of the Worthington Public Library Association, is seated second from left.

Below: A view of west High Street (circa 1910-1915) shows what downtown Worthington looked like when the Worthington Public Library Association was formed. This photo shows 671-673 High Street.



build a library in so small a place.”

In 1912, the library purchased its first card catalog system and had 2,766 books in the collection. Circulation for January 1912-May 1913 was 5,998 volumes. The members of the Board declared that they “have been united in their efforts to promote the growth and usefulness of the Library, and to make the most of the funds provided for its support and feel warranted in saying that the Library has had a successful year.”

In October 1913, the board “Resolved, that no book either purchased or donated may be shelved in the library until censored by the book committee.” There is no reason given for the necessity of this resolution or any examples of censored material. This move can either be interpreted as true censorship or the board’s first attempt to establish collection guidelines.

1914 was a difficult year for the library and its board as both their treasurer, Mr. Nelson, and the librarian, Grace Robinson, passed away (she was replaced by Helen T. Parsons). Miss Robinson’s dedication and the board’s appreciation of her work are illustrated in the following entry in the library’s minutes:

“Our librarian has also been called away. She had been in ill health for more than two years, but felt she could not give up the work. She loved the library better, perhaps, than did any other person. Let us remember that she has done us a good service in putting the library in good order, and studied to properly enter, catalogue, and classify the books. This required much more time than she received pay for, and it puts the library in shape so that we can be proud of it.”

In 1916, the library association made a final attempt to contact the Carnegie Library Association about a library building for Worthington. They asked for and received letters of endorsement from the Governor of Ohio and Senator Harding and sought the direct influence of Col. James Kilbourne (grandson of James Kilbourne, founder of Worthington). The latter stated that “if Mr. Carnegie would not become interested in this project, he would personally take the matter up with Mrs. Deshler, in Columbus, and he thought she might, on behalf of the Kilbourne heirs, erect a Library building.”

The library board received a quick reply from the Carnegie Library Association, “in substance stating that they had received the application and acknowledging the commendatory letters written by these several gentleman; however, the Corporation had decided not to make any further appropriations for library buildings in Ohio, for the reason that they had

found the cities and villages to be extremely delinquent in keeping up their pledges.”

With hopes of securing a Carnegie Library in Worthington finally dashed, Col. Kilbourne agreed, “after he returned from a little trip,” to discuss the matter with his cousin, Mrs. Deshler.

Throughout the library’s history, the trustees and staff have shown a profound willingness to help others in the community and exhibited a sense of the wider world around them despite their quaint village surroundings.

In 1917, the library board responded to a request from Washington, D.C. to begin a national campaign “to raise \$1,000 for soldiers and sailors, and had apportioned to each community 5% of the population to be contributed. At a meeting of the trustees it was decided that each trustee should be responsible for a \$5 contribution, which would be more than our apportionment.” In early 1918, librarian Rose O. Little (who replaced Helen T. Parsons) reported that 522 books were collected and would be sent to soldier camps.

Still, discussion of securing a proper building for the Library continued to occupy most board meetings. On April 1, 1918, “Mrs. Wellman moved that the Secretary be instructed to communicate with the Board of Education on the question of providing a site for a Library building at the northwest corner of the school lot facing the square.” Unfortunately, no solution was reached as two years later, on May 10, 1920, the secretary’s report states that the library “has grown in usefulness and so much in size that we are crowded for room, and have discussed often the problem of getting from some source an out and out library building. We are still hoping that in the not too far off future we may have a building of which Worthington and Sharon Township may be proud.”

In May 1921, the board’s clear frustration with their situation and the seeming lack of community support was made plainly apparent in the secretary’s report. “I think I speak the sentiment of the members of the board, when I say we have tried to do our best, but we feel that the people of the town and township ought to show a greater interest in the welfare of the library...” At this point, due to a steady decrease in income, the library was renting new books for 2 cents per day. Effective November 1921, the library’s yearly rent was raised to \$100, a \$25 increase. This is a substantial amount when you consider the library’s annual budget had never surpassed \$1,000 and that cash balance on hand was usually less than \$500. In January 1923, the treasurer reported “no funds in the treasury except for current expenses.”

The Library was at a crucial juncture. It had outgrown its space, but since 1909 had been unsuccessful in finding anyone willing to fund a library building in Worthington. The community used the Library, but seemed unwilling to support it financially and money was running out.

In April 1923, the board agreed to take the matter to both the Perry Township School Board and the Worthington Board of Education. In October, the board received word from the Township that they would only receive "\$40 this year with the promise of \$500 next year." The Board was now faced with the possibility of closing the Library. "It is evident from this report that the Library will be in need of financial support from some other source by the 1st of January, 1924. A lengthy discussion was had on this matter and trustees decided to appeal to the Chamber of Commerce rather than asking for contributions." They also agreed to have signs posted in the Library stating that it would close on January 1st if no solution to the funding need could be found.

The Library managed to remain open thanks to contributions from the Township and Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber presented a play and divided the proceeds between the Library and the American Legion), but a more permanent fix for the library's finances was now in the works.

In April 1924, "there was a discussion as to the advisability of asking the School Board to assume control of the Library in order that the finances of the library may be more assured, and that one of the members of the School Board be told of this plan in order that he may bring it before the Board at their next meeting."

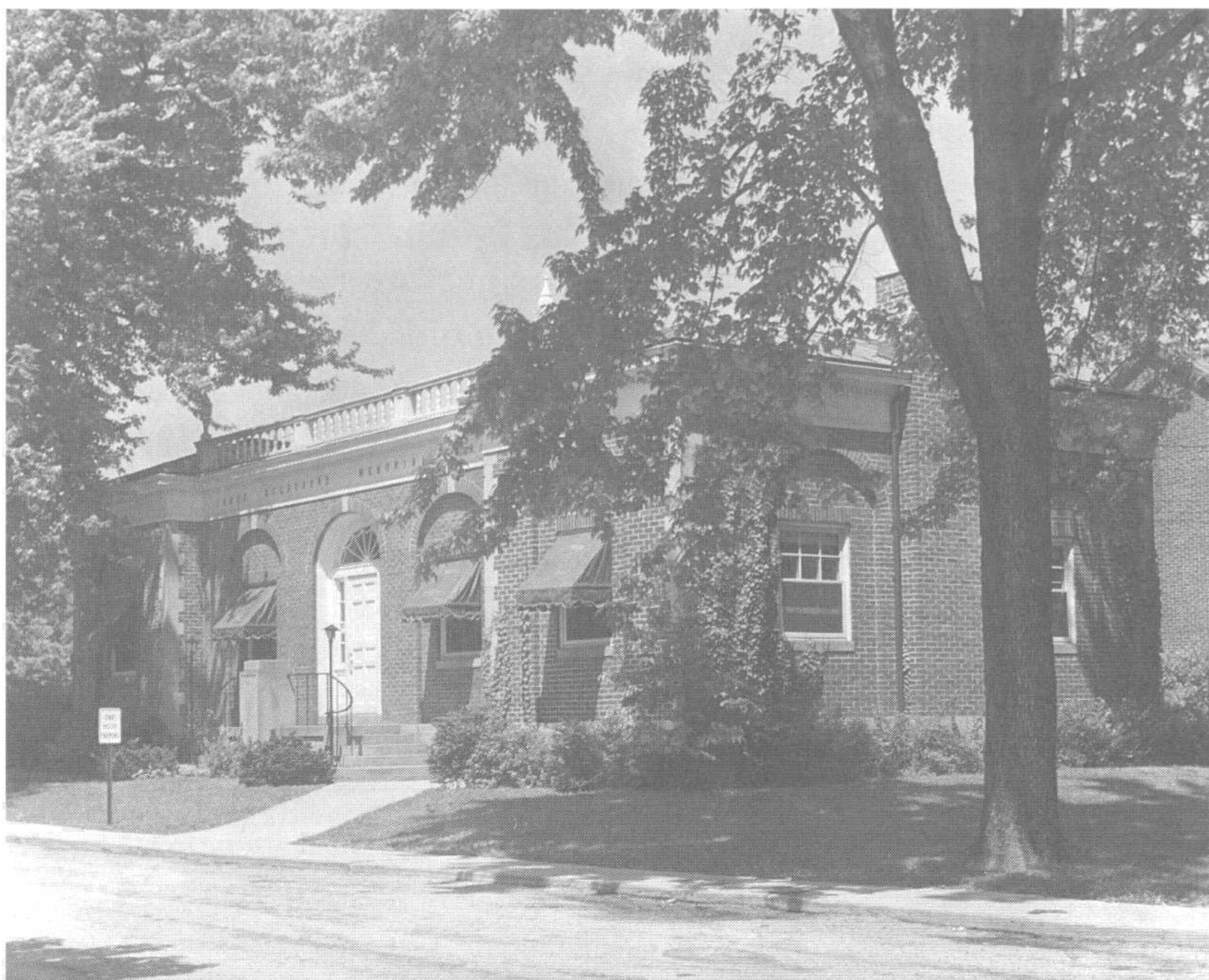
The State Librarian of Ohio, Mr. Hirshberg, was asked to attend the board's annual meeting in May to discuss the possibility of reorganizing the Library under the 1921 School Library Law and dissolving the Library Association. After his presentation, the board "Resolved, that the Worthington Library Assocn. urge the Board of Education of the Worthington School District to take such action as may be necessary to establish a Library under the 'School District Public Library Law,' and that the Trustees of the Library Association be authorized to turn over to the Library Board, when organized, the property and effects of the present Association, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon."

They were successful. In July, they sent a notice to the Village and Township clerks "to the effect that it will not be necessary for them to make a levy for Library Purposes for the year 1924" and in 1925, the Worthington Public Library was established as a school district library.



Above: The Worthington Public Library (circa 1930), looking south, in its first dedicated home at 752 High Street on the NE quadrant of the Village Green. The building was donated by Mary Elizabeth Jones Deshler, granddaughter of Worthington founder James Kilbourne, and came to be called the James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building.

Below: This photo, dated 1953, shows the north and south wings which were added to the Library in 1931. This is how the Library looked until it was again expanded in 1956. The center section, which comprises the front door and two closest windows, was the original library shown above.



Chapter Four

A Home on the Village Green

—
1925-1950

"A library is...liberty."—Ann Patchett

The Library was placed in the control of the Worthington School Board, establishing it as a school district public library, in 1925. This assured the Library of much-needed financial support but did not provide an actual building to house the collection. At the time, the Library was still renting space above the Leasure Drug Store on High Street.

This finally changed in 1927 when Mary Elizabeth Jones Deshler paid a visit to her friend, librarian Rose Little. According to Mrs. Little, after walking up the flight of stairs to the library's small rooms, Mrs. Deshler exclaimed, "My Rose, I hate to see you working in these cramped quarters. How about me building you a nice new library?"

Apparently, being approached by Col. Kilbourne more than 10 years before was not enough to persuade her of the need for a building, but a firsthand look at the library's crowded space was now all that was necessary.

Mrs. Deshler donated money for a library building on the northeast corner of the Village Green, the area set aside by the Scioto Company for the public pursuit of learning and education and the location once discussed by the Worthington Public Library Association. The building was opened and dedicated to the memory of her grandfather, James Kilbourne, on November 4, 1927, but Mrs. Deshler was not altogether happy with it.

She thought the building too small for a fitting memorial. Rose Little agreed, and claimed the architects who designed the building wouldn't listen to her when she tried to explain the amount of room needed to serve a growing library and population. Wanting a suitable tribute to her grandfather, Mrs. Deshler suggested the addition of north and south wings on what would be called the James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building. The north wing was dedicated to her mother and the south wing to her grandmother. Upon the building's completion in 1931, Mrs. Deshler was finally proud of her memorial to her family.

In the early '30s, in the midst of the Great Depression, the Library decided to charge a fee to out-of-district borrowers, suggesting that their numbers were substantial enough to cause a strain on the library's finances. Non-residents were charged a deposit of \$1 to take books from the Library in 1930. In 1932, they began charging \$1 per library card to residents living outside the school district (with teachers being exempt). In further efforts to reduce costs, the Library cut its hours, removed its telephone service, bought fewer books and decreased Rose Little's salary from \$65 to \$50 a month. As is routinely the case in difficult economic times, library use continued to grow.

In 1937, Dorothy Grove Foutts was hired as the library's first full-time trained cataloger at a salary of \$100 per month. Not long after Mrs. Foutts was hired, librarian Rose Little, who had been with the Library since 1918, was asked to resign. She was 78 years old and in the months leading up to her resignation the Board had made several inquiries as to a mandatory retirement age for librarians. She initially refused the board's request, but eventually agreed to leave.

When Rose Little left the Library at the end of 1937, Dorothy Foutts was promptly promoted to head librarian—the first person with professional training to hold this position. In reading the board minutes, it's easy to conclude that as a trained librarian, Dorothy Foutts had many new ideas that stood in sharp contrast to those of Rose Little. In less than one year, she weeded the library's collection from 15,000 to 5,770 volumes and began to buy materials to serve children, young adults and parents.

In 1938, the Library secured the services of Dorothy Derr and Wray Wickline through the Works Project Administration, a national program that began in 1935 to create public jobs for the unemployed. Miss Derr typed catalog cards, book cards and correspondence, while Mr. Wickline cleaned shelves, dusted and mended over 1,200 books in a single year.

Also in 1938, the Library began presenting a weekly story hour for children. The story hours were a huge hit with the public and were presented by Dorothy Foutts, who had very clear notions about what was appropriate reading material for Worthington's young people. In a 1938 report to the board of trustees she stated, "Since the Tarzan books were removed from the library shelves they seem to have been forgotten and the librarian is hopeful that the reading taste among children may be improved. With the gradual elimination of all series books and the purchase of well written, wholesome stories, the library may be certain of becoming an educational influence on the lives of young people."

By 1940, the library's story times were considered to be one of the

most successful library programs in the state with 30-65 children attending each one.

As was the case during World War I, the Library was not untouched by larger world events and World War II in particular left its mark on the services, staff and materials provided by the Library. In 1940, the Library participated in a "Victory Book Campaign" to support the Armed Services. In 1943, head librarian Mary Elizabeth Kirns (who had replaced Dorothy Foutts in 1941) resigned to take the position of Camp Librarian at the Air Corps Training School in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Miss Kirns was replaced by Elma Whitney.



Miss Jean Darby, Worthington's first children's librarian, with a group of children in August 1940.

The annual report presented in 1943 saw a new trend in reading habits as a result of the war. Books on home economy, gardening, aviation and radio were very popular. On May 19, 1944, the Library presented a program called "The Library Faces the Home Front."

Even the war, however, did not prevent the Library from advancing its mission.

In 1940, the first trained children's librarian, Miss Jean Darby, was employed, and in 1943 the building's basement became a dedicated children's room. In 1945, the Worthington Public Library became the first public library in Franklin County to hire a trained young adult librarian, Miss Marguerite Carder of Roanoke, Virginia. At this time, the library's annual budget was \$11,481 and it prided itself on never having a "quiet or hushed atmosphere."

The Library was also gaining a national reputation. In 1944, *Library Journal* magazine did a feature story on the new children's room and, in 1945, the public relations office of the American Library Association requested permission to use the library as a locale for an educational film on community library services. In 1948, Elma Whitney was the "featured librarian" in the October 30 edition of *Publisher's Weekly*.

At the conclusion of World War II, Worthington, like many cities and towns across the country, experienced tremendous growth and an increase in library use. Although the James Kilbourne Memorial Library

building was less than 25 years old, the growing collection and increasing circulation were already straining the facility and its staff.

Monthly circulation reached an all-time high in March 1949 with 7,543 volumes and continued to climb in the following months. Overcrowding had caused the cancellation of the library's annual signature event, an open house during Book Week, for two years in a row, and the staff was forced to use the window seats on the main floor as additional shelf space.

Elma Whitney's December 1949 report to the board sums up the difficult situation: "Our circulation continues to increase and we are now nearing the 8,000 circulation mark per month. When you consider 2,000 circulated volumes a month per staff member is a normal load, it is evident how pushed we are for time to catalog, attend to routine tasks and present an unruffled, patient and calm approach to the public. Each staff member regrets this and feels it poses a serious problem now and in the months to come if our business continues to increase."

Although some of the pressure on staff was alleviated by the purchase of a new Gaylord charging machine in 1950 (necessitating that 2,300 new library cards be re-typed), 25 years had now passed since Mrs. Deshler paid her fateful visit to Rose O. Little and the growing Worthington Public Library was once again in desperate need of space.

Chapter Five

1951-1991

A Growing Library and Community

“Consider what you have in the smallest of libraries.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

When the James Kilbourne Memorial Library opened in 1927, it was a small library building meant to circulate between 20,000-30,000 books per year. In 1952, annual circulation was more than 100,000 items for the first time and head librarian Elma Whitney felt “restricted by a building built to serve that quiet New England village of a by-gone era.”

In 1953, the Library circulated 118,836 books from a collection of 24,533 volumes and had 4,697 registered borrowers. The Library served several surrounding townships and maintained a collection at the Harding Sanitarium. An excerpt from a library history written by Elma Whitney reads,

“What the Library could do with adequate quarters and facilities for films, records, periodicals, work with school and community groups, delivery book service, etc. is a hope and dream for the future. What it has accomplished, is a tribute to all those members of its boards of trustees who have always strived for, and believed in, progressive methods, the best in books and service, trained personnel, and intellectual freedom—the foundation of good library service anywhere in these United States.”

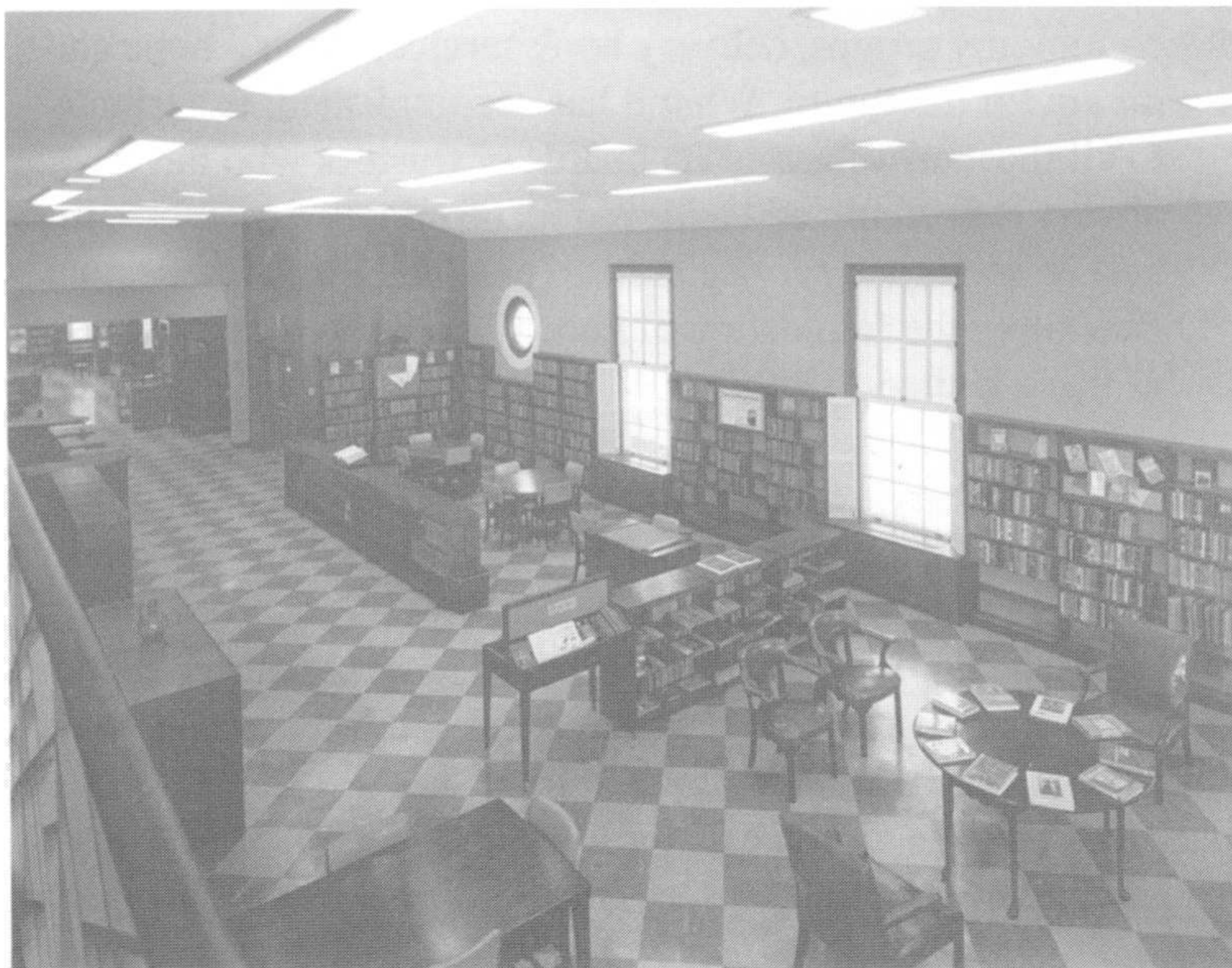
In 1954, the library’s budget request was \$116,020 with \$80,000 designated for a building fund to expand the Library. In 1956, after years of living with cramped conditions, the library’s north wing was finally enlarged and the additional space allowed for an expanded collection and services. The open house to celebrate this new addition was held on November 18 and was attended by 350 people.

User fees became an issue again in 1957, when the board agreed that anyone residing in the county for less than three months would be consid-



Above: Worthington Public Library Board of Trustees look over plans for the 1956 building addition. Left to right: Howard Potter, Frank Corbin, Librarian Elma Whitney, Mary Virginia Harding, Vance Smith and Helen B. Robinson. Robinson was a member of the Fortnightly Club and served as a library board member in 1908 when the Worthington Public Library Association was established.

Below: The interior of the James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building at 752 High Street after the completion of the 1956 addition.



ered "transient" and charged a deposit of \$10 to borrow materials. Also in 1957, the library board agreed to the purchase of a record player and the start of a record collection. One year later, the Library had more than 200 albums and 300 records available to senior high students and adults.

The library's budget was over \$100,000 for the first time in 1962, when the first book drop was also installed. Circulation was increasing an average of 10% per year. February 1963 is described in the board meeting minutes as "the month of the most." On February 23, the Library circulated 1,054 books and 300 records. Monthly circulation was 18,584.

Censorship, always an issue for public libraries, was discussed at a meeting held on March 11, 1963. "The librarian suggested that in view of the difficulty in many libraries across the country concerning censorship and pressure groups it might be well to consider some kind of written book and reading policy." After a brief discussion, it was decided that no changes be made and "that parents were basically responsible for the books read by their children."

1966 proved to be a year fraught with change for the Library. Trustee Mary Virginia Harding was denied her request to serve another term on the library board by the Worthington Board of Education. After 14 years of service to the Library, she was replaced by Father Anthony Kleinschmidt of the Josephinum College. Three board members, Harry Moore, Frank Corbin and Howard Potter, immediately resigned and voiced their dissatisfaction about the board appointment process to the Board of Education in writing. In her annual report to the Board, Elma Whitney stated that it had been a year of "holding the line" with services. "With a new board, increased budget, a swelling population, limited facilities, shortages in personnel, increased reference demands, requests for additional open hours, and interest in making the library more community-centered, there is need for re-evaluation of our purpose and service." As was the case several times before in its history, the Library was once again confined by too little space and an increased demand for service.

In 1967, after 24 years of service to the Library, Elma Whitney resigned and was replaced by Bernice E. (Cudd) Daniels.

In 1968, the Library was open 10 hours longer each week, experienced a 12% rise in circulation and began providing service to homebound patrons and the first preschool story hours. On a rather amusing note, use by Worthington teenagers interested in more than just completing their assignments was highlighted as a problem this year by a clearly dismayed Mrs. Daniels in her June report to the board. "With the end of the school year in sight, it is debatable whether the young people

perceive the library's primary function as that of an educational agency or a social one. The mating game, which obviously interests many students more than the educational one, should be played in a playing field other than the public library, because the rules of that game make it impossible to provide a conducive atmosphere for serious users. We do not have sufficient space to isolate the gamers. These matters should be considered before next spring when the sap begins to flow through the young veins once again." The board briefly discussed hiring an off-duty police officer to serve as a security guard as a possible remedy to the situation.

Troublesome teens aside, the Library had, in fact, seen its share of crime. Since moving to the Village Green, it had been burglarized and vandalized several times. In one of the more curious incidents, two winged-back chairs and a brass reading lamp disappeared in the middle of the night. There were no signs of forced entry and the cash box was left untouched, suggesting the culprit needed home furnishings more than money.

On July 21, 1969, the Library closed to celebrate man's first walk on the moon. During this same year, the Worthington Public Library began its cooperative partnership with the Columbus Metropolitan Library with Columbus agreeing to process materials for Worthington at the rate of \$1 per book.

Whether a sign of the changing times or an attempt to recast the Library in a less conservative role, 1970 brought a number of interesting library programs, materials and services to Worthington. A parent-teenager book discussion of the title *Tuned Out*, a novel dealing with the drug scene, was held, and the "No Silence" theme for National Library Week was punctuated with a rock band performing on the Village Green. The Library also added *Playboy* to its periodical subscriptions.

Throughout the '70s, the Library continued to grow. Monthly circulation was now roughly 25,000 items and there was no additional room in the library's charming, but now very outdated, home on the Village Green. Several options, including building an additional branch, expanding the current building and opening a storefront library, were explored.

In 1972, The Friends of the Worthington Public Library was established as a membership support group for the Library. It was the first library Friends group in Franklin County (see Chapter Eight for additional information on the Friends).

In 1973, the Library proposed the option of relocating to land it had purchased at Larrimer Avenue and High Street, believed to be a more

central location for use by the entire district. Although less than a mile north of 752 High Street, people were vehemently opposed to the library's relocation anywhere away from the Village Green. A three year, two-mill tax levy was defeated by a vote of 3,918 to 3,189 in November 1973. The same proposal was again rejected by voters in November 1974.

Public opposition to the move focused on keeping the Library "where it belonged" on the Village Green. Community members organized themselves into groups called the "Library Facts Committee," "Committee for Sane Library Policy" and "Committee Against Unnecessary Taxes." They wrote letters to the editor and took out ads in the local newspapers denouncing library management and the library board as "akin to King George" and referred to the Library as an "aggrandized association" determined to move to the "boondocks."

In 1975, after the levy was twice defeated by Worthington voters, the library board agreed to ask the Franklin County Budget Commission for additional funds from the Intangibles Tax to pursue construction of a new library. This further infuriated the opposition who felt the Library was going directly against the wishes of the community in pursuit of its own expansion goals.

Although the building at 752 High Street had plagued the Library with space constraints and overwhelming maintenance issues since 1927, the community was clearly sentimentally attached to it and library administration's concerns about over-crowding and increased circulation did nothing to dissuade them from their firmly held belief that the Library should remain in the heart of the village.

A solution was finally found in 1976, when the Worthington Public Library and Worthington Schools Board of Education agreed to trade properties for their mutual benefit. The schools owned land within walking distance of 752 High Street and were in need of a building to house their growing administration staff. The land, on the corner of Hartford Street and Stafford Avenue, would be used to build a new library that was within site of the original building as well as downtown Worthington.

Groundbreaking for the new library was held on July 4, 1978. Using the intangibles tax money for planning and construction, which necessitated the destruction of three homes and the relocation of the former rectory of St. John's Episcopal Church, the new Worthington Public Library celebrated its grand opening on October 21, 1979 with 500 people in attendance. The new, modern library was 24,400 sq. ft. (twice the size of the old building) and featured a dedicated media center, comfortable

A Changing Library...



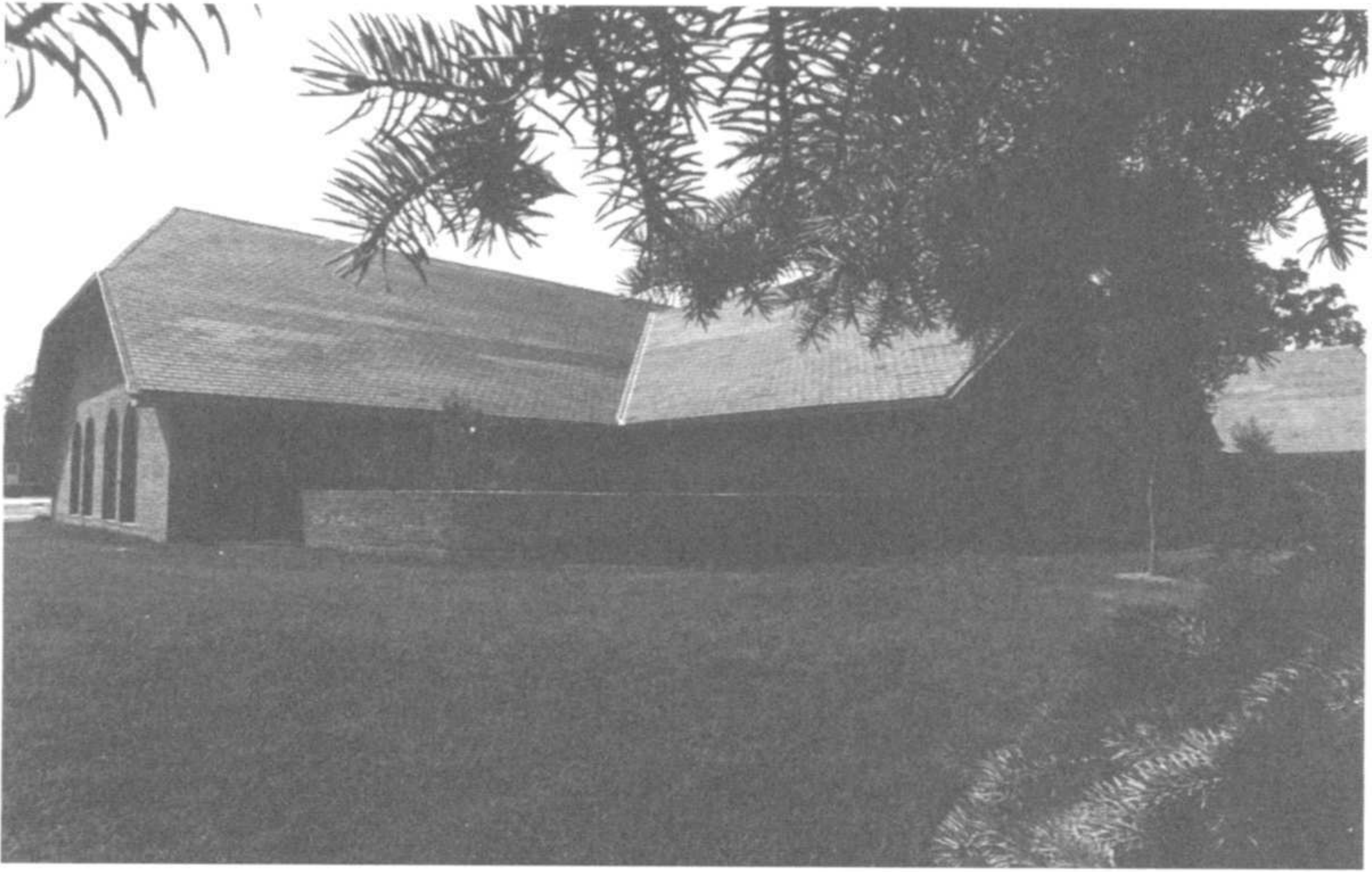
Left: Not something you see everyday at the Library. Bellydancer Jane Saliaris offered instruction at three coffee hour programs in 1977.



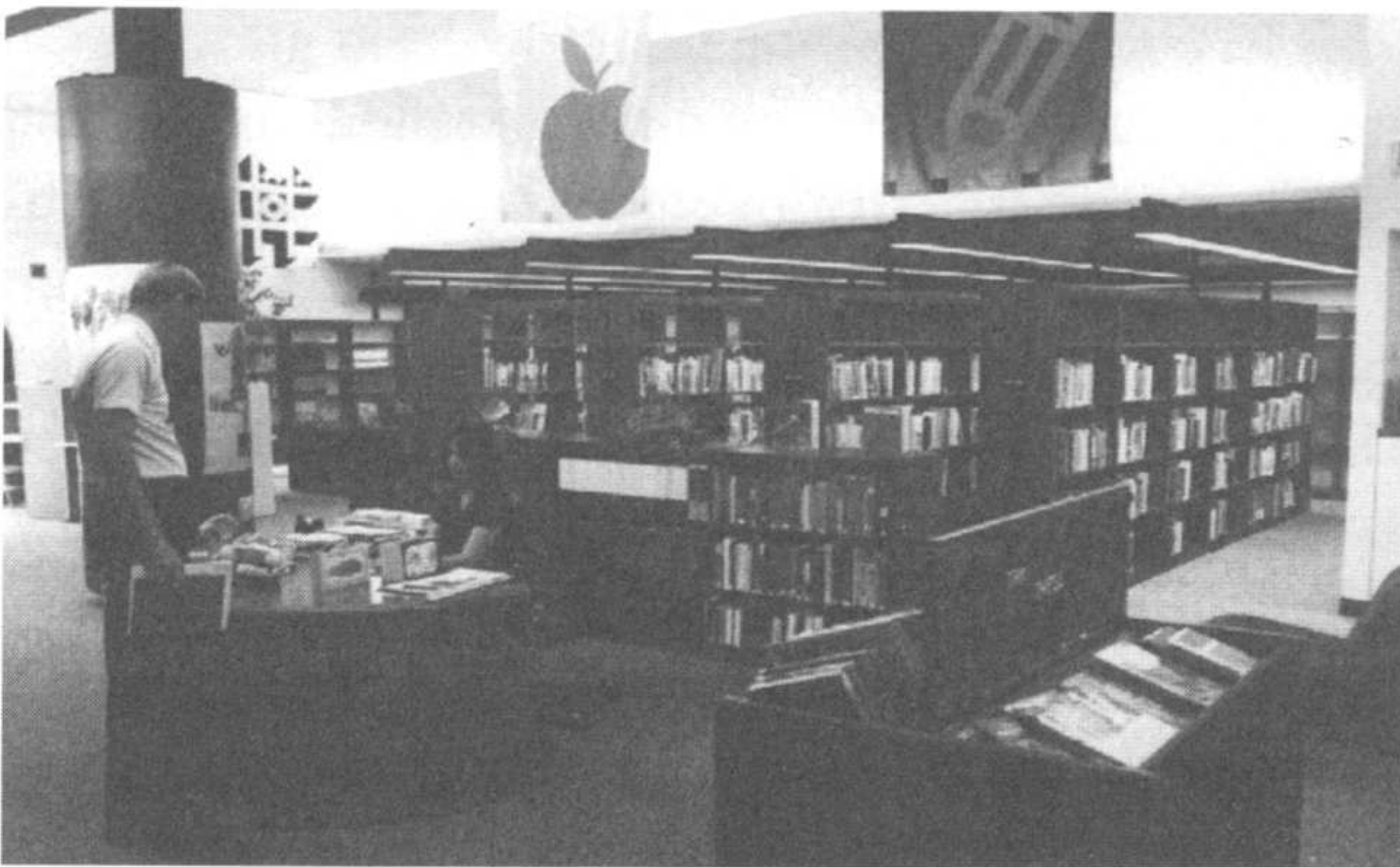
Left: Library staff at 1978 groundbreaking for new library at 805 Hartford Street. Library director Bernice Daniels is holding the shovel.

Right: The construction of the Library required that the Old Rectory, shown here, be relocated. The rectory was built in 1845 and was the first parsonage for St. John's Episcopal Church. Originally located on the Village Green, it was moved to Hartford Street in 1924. It is now located at 50 W. New England Avenue and houses the Worthington Historical Society.





Above: The new Worthington Public Library celebrated its grand opening on October 21, 1979. *Below:* Librarian Rachel Alexander helps a patron in the new library's children's department.



Right: The Library introduced the community to Apple II computers in 1981.

chairs and piped music. Within one year, circulation rose 33% and average daily circulation was 1,500. The new Library was later honored with a City Beautiful Award by the Greater Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau.

It was also in 1979 when the Library began to use bar codes to identify patrons and books and an automated Gaylord circulation system. Resource sharing has always been important to the Library, and it shared the Gaylord system with Columbus and Westerville libraries.

In the early '80s, the library's extensive movie collection, which had earlier featured 16 mm and 8 mm films, was highlighted with a series of programs and screenings of such diverse fare as *The Hustler*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Planet of the Apes* and *Urban Cowboy*. In one month, these programs were attended by over 1,000 people. Art, including visual, textile and sculpture by local and nationally-recognized artists was also regularly exhibited. Outreach activities included books delivered to area pools by the "Worthington Bookies." These are clear examples of the library pursuing its role as community center as described by Elma Whitney in 1966.

The Library introduced the community to Apple II microcomputers in February 1981. They were initially greeted with both enthusiasm and trepidation by staff and library patrons alike. Bernice Daniels, however, had the foresight to realize computers were not a fad but destined to be a major part of library and information service in the future. She began to train staff to develop and present programs to the public on basic computer literacy skills.

In 1984, circulation at the Worthington Public Library was 620,014—the second highest in central Ohio. After the Worthington, Westerville and Columbus libraries migrated to a new catalog system in the '80s, Columbus found it could not meet the demand. Worthington and Westerville agreed to separate from Columbus and shared an online catalog (until 1994 when Worthington would join Columbus Metropolitan's Discovery Place system).

In 1985, the Library needed to expand once again and plans were approved to add a 30 ft. by 47 ft. addition to the north side of the north-east wing of the building. The library's use had increased 55% in the five years since it opened on Hartford Street and the additional space was used for reference, periodicals and magazines.

In 1986, the state intangibles tax was replaced by the Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF) from the state income tax. This meant funding for libraries would fluctuate along with the personal

income tax and the state legislature could cut funding if necessary to balance the state's budget. The library's budget for this year was \$1,950,396.58. It ranked 19th in the state in circulation, 49th in number of volumes, 24th in operating expenses and 31st in staffing.

As the population and area of the school district continued its growth, so did use of library services. It once again became obvious that neither funding from the LLGSF nor the Hartford Street building could meet the community's needs and the Library decided to place a 1.5 mill levy request on the November 1990 ballot. A survey was conducted and found that 83% of those who responded had used the Library within the past year. It also indicated that people would be willing to support a levy to expand library services.

The library board began investigating land owned by the United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH) north of downtown Worthington. Although unwilling to sell the land, the UMCH was willing to lease the land for use by the Library. Additional options included expansion of the building at 805 Hartford Street and two new satellite libraries, or kiosks, to serve the growing northwest and northeast portions of the school district.

On November 6, 1990, a 1.5 mill library levy was once again rejected by Worthington voters. The board expressed its disappointment and determination with the following statement: "The failure of the levy does not change the library's commitment to provide quality service, nor does it diminish the critical need for space if such service is to be provided." In December, annual circulation passed 1 million items for the first time in the library's history.

In 1991, a Citizens Advisory Committee was formed to deal with the issues brought forward in the levy campaign and to address them with the community in an effort to advance the library's expansion goals with a majority of support.

Also that year, Bernice Daniels announced her retirement. During her 24 years at the helm of the Worthington Public Library, Bernice saw the dawn of the computer age and the demise of the card catalog. She introduced new programs, upheld intellectual freedom (even going to court for refusing to give the police the name of a patron suspected of leaving a library book in a stolen car), built the library's staff and collection, coordinated the construction of a new library building and weathered three failed attempts at passing a library levy. The goal of passing a levy, increasing the library's funding and providing service to northwest residents would be a challenge left to the next library director.



Above: New library director Meribah Mansfield “rallies the troops” at the September 17, 1992 levy campaign kick-off event.

Below: Library trustee Bill McNutt and library director Meribah Mansfield tabulate votes as they are reported from district polling places on Election Day, November 3, 1992.



Chapter Six

1991-2000

Change and Expansion

"I always dreamed that Paradise would be a kind of library."

—Jorge Luis Borges

In December 1991, Meribah Mansfield was hired to replace Bernice Daniels as director of the Worthington Public Library. Mrs. Mansfield came to Worthington from the Columbus Metropolitan Library and had recently overseen the renovation of their Main Library, where she was director. She arrived at the Library faced with a very familiar set of circumstances; the Library had outgrown its current facility but had little money and no concrete plans for expanding services.

The Citizens Advisory Committee formed in 1991 had worked to develop a plan for library service in Worthington, and implementing it was to be Mrs. Mansfield's primary goal for the next year. The Committee believed the previous levy failed because it did not clearly explain the need for increased library services as most people already perceived the Library to be fulfilling their needs. They did, however, determine a definite desire for expanded children's services, additional parking and public meeting rooms. If the Library was to win the support of voters, it needed to make its case to all sectors of the district.

Having experience passing levies in other libraries, Meribah Mansfield knew it would take a lot of work to educate Worthington voters about the mechanics of library funding and the need for expanded library service. She was very methodical in this process and began a series of meetings with concerned citizens and community groups. She worked with a fundraising committee to secure private funds to pay for a campaign mailing and prepared extensive background information on the campaign for staff and trustees. This included frequently asked questions, statistics, maps, timelines and publicity schedules. She also encouraged the reorganization of the Friends of the Library, which had been dissolved by Bernice Daniels 10 years earlier, and gave them renewed purpose as library advocates.

The library levy package included a partnership with the Columbus Metropolitan Library to provide funds for the construction and operation

of a Northwest Library to serve patrons in this rapidly growing area of the library's service district. Additional levy promises included:

- ♦ To maintain quality despite diminished state funds.
- ♦ To expand and improve Children's and Reference Services.
- ♦ To preserve the character of the building at Hartford Street by relieving congestion and noise and making necessary repairs.
- ♦ To provide better access and services to the 46% of library district residents who live west of the Olentangy River.
- ♦ To plan for the library's future growth by anticipating needs in the northeast quadrant.
- ♦ For a responsible use of tax dollars through cooperation with Columbus Metropolitan Library.

In November 1992, the Worthington Public Library passed a 2.2 mill, 22-year operating levy. It was a major accomplishment for the Library, its trustees and new director, who had only been on the job for 11 months.

On October 13, 1993, trustees from the Columbus Metropolitan Library and Worthington Public Library signed a joint development agreement for the construction and operation of the Northwest Library.

In 1994, the Library further advanced this partnership by joining Discovery Place, the Columbus Metropolitan Library's catalog. This partnership now enables Worthington Libraries patrons to borrow materials from any branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library and Southwest Public Libraries systems. It provides access to nearly four million items and has allowed the Library to further refine and grow its individual collection.

Groundbreaking for the Northwest Library took place on September 13, 1994. Halfway through its construction, the contractor defaulted and a new company had to be found to complete the job. Despite this unforeseen trouble, opening day went off without a hitch on April 16, 1996.

Northwest Library is the first library in Ohio and only the second in the entire nation to be built and operated by two library systems. It is managed by the Worthington Public Library.

The Northwest Library primarily serves the area between the Olentangy and Scioto rivers, extending from the Delaware County line south to Henderson Road. It is a 23,000 square foot, single level building, with public seating for 225 and parking spaces for 193 vehicles and 15 bicycles. The Library opened with a collection of 100,000 books and 10,000 audio-visual items.

While the Northwest Library was under construction, the Library

fulfilled another levy promise with the purchase of nearly four acres of land in the northeast portion of its service district. This land was purchased to preserve the option of a possible future library branch to serve northeast district residents.

A major structural problem necessitated removal and replacement of much of the roof of the Old Worthington Library building at 805 Hartford Street during 1996 and 1997. While this work was underway, a former bank building adjacent to the Library at 820 High Street, which had been purchased by the Worthington Public Library in 1993, was pressed into service as a temporary library.

For over a year, patrons endured cramped quarters and limited parking. The Library worked hard to maintain an open line of communication with the community—to reassure them that the new library would be even better than the one they'd come to know and love.

The main section of Old Worthington Library re-opened in August 1997. Community volunteers and youth booster groups helped move the collection back into the Library. In May 1998, Administration and Technical Services moved into renovated space in the former bank building. The new north entrance and parking lot also opened, and the meeting room and conference room became available for public use. On July 7, 1998, Old Worthington Library hosted an official dedication ceremony complete with a letter of congratulations from then Governor George V. Voinovich.

By combining two buildings, the renovated Old Worthington Library went from 28,000 square feet to 42,000 square feet. The connector between the buildings provides a spacious lobby with restrooms, entrances from both the north and south and a Friends of the Library gift counter.

Both Old Worthington Library and Northwest Library have modern children's areas complete with life-size characters from classic children's stories. The Story Garden at Northwest Library includes John Henry, Wilbur from *Charlotte's Web* and Alice of *Alice in Wonderland*. Characters in Old Worthington Library's Buckingham Forest include Arthur, Whinnie the Dragon and King Arthur. Weekly story time sessions held in these areas regularly attract hundreds of children and their caregivers.

In 1991, the Library had only 16 computers for use by the public and staff. By 2000, that number increased to 151. Worthington Libraries also maintains two web sites: its own at worthingtonlibraries.org and a community site at worthington.org.

The worthington.org site represents a partnership among Worthington Libraries, Worthington Schools, City of Worthington, Worthington Convention

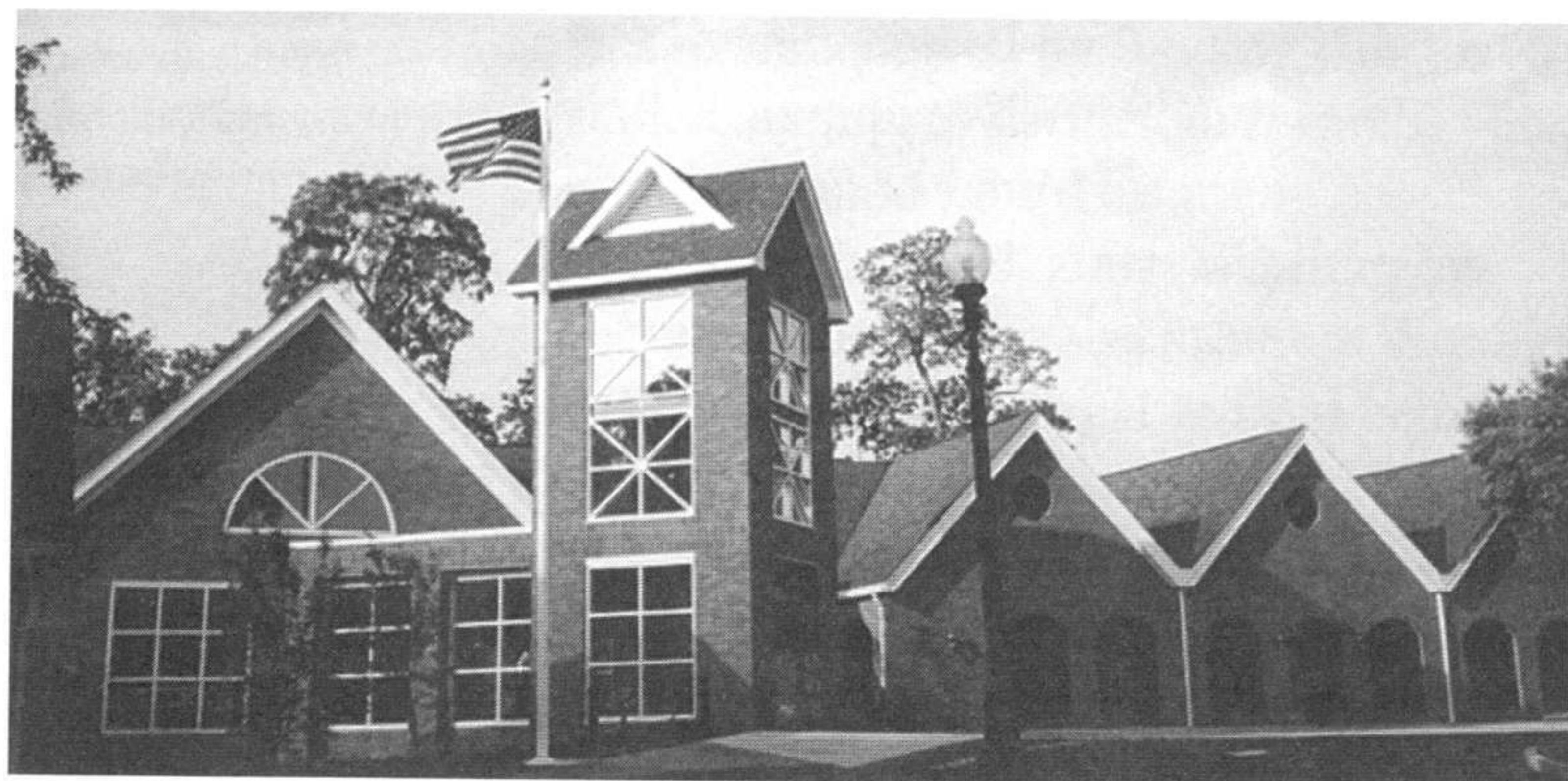
Northwest Library

This series of photos details the construction of Northwest Library which opened on April 16, 1996. Northwest Library now circulates more than 1 million items per year.



Old Worthington Library

This series of photos details the roof replacement and renovation of Old Worthington Library.



and Visitors Bureau and the Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce. To train people in the use of the library's electronic information and to offer them guidance in their navigation of the Internet, the library introduced CyberSchool computer training classes in 1996.

In a span of less than 10 years, the Library passed its first operating levy, built the Northwest Library, increased its operating budget to \$6 million and brought technology to thousands of Worthington residents.

Chapter Seven

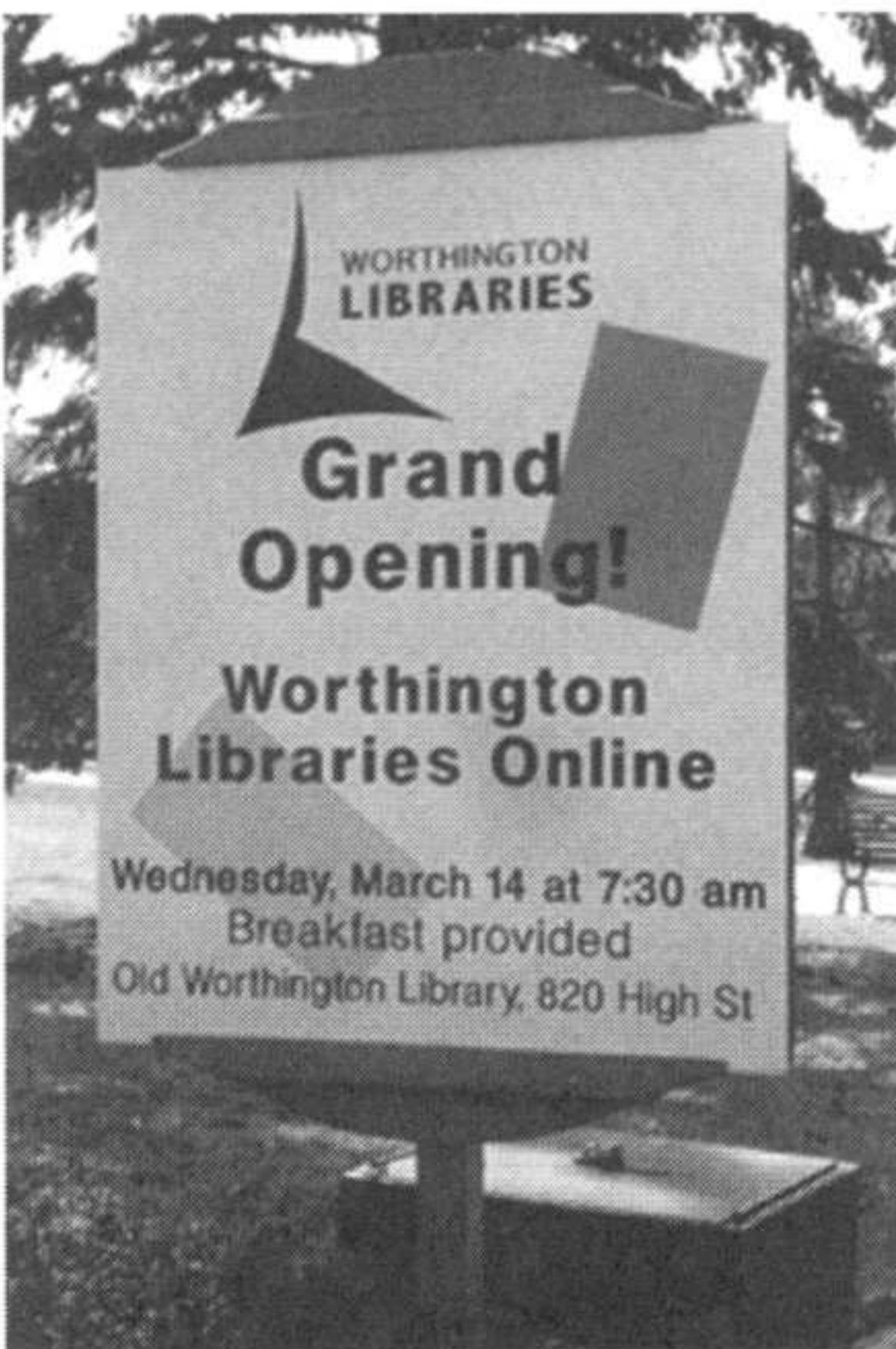
2001-Present

A Library for the Future

“A good library is a joyful place where the imagination roams free, and life is actively enriched.”

—John K. Hutchens

In 2001, 2002 and 2003, Worthington Libraries was recognized as one of only five finalists for the Library of the Year Award annually sponsored by *Library Journal* magazine and Gale Group Publishing. This is a remarkable achievement—Worthington is the only library system to be so honored three years in a row—and testament to all the Library is doing to serve its community.



Sign posted on the Village Green inviting community to attend grand opening of new web site.

2001 marked a new era in the life of the Library with a change in logos and marketing name (going from Worthington Public Library to the more inclusive Worthington Libraries), the launch of a new online library, a two-day Future Search conference and development of a four-year strategic plan.

The fact that most of this was accomplished within the first six months of the year speaks volumes about the dedication of the staff, director and library board. It was also incredibly fortunate as the latter half of 2001 was overshadowed by funding cuts and a stalled attempt to partner with another library system to build a third location.

On March 14, 2001, Worthington Libraries opened its third location: Worthington Libraries Online at www.worthingtonlibraries.org. Far from being a new and improved version of the library's web site, Worthington Libraries Online is a real library where patrons can reserve and renew books and connect to library-exclusive information resources.

Features of the online library include Ask a Librarian e-mail reference, an online library card application and My Library—a customizable

user interface that allows patrons to create their own personal library page with the electronic resources and web sites used most often.

Aside from boosting the library's Internet presence and access to services, Worthington Libraries Online has received national recognition and several awards, including:

- ♦The marketing campaign for Worthington Libraries Online was recognized by the Ohio Library Council and included in their "Simply the Best: Marketing and Public Relations" showcase in October 2001.
- ♦LibrarySpot.com selected Worthington Libraries Online as its "Site of the Month" for February 2002.
- ♦The "My Library" feature of Worthington Libraries Online was selected for inclusion in the list of "Innovative Internet Applications in Libraries" maintained by the Wilton Public Library in Wilton, CT.
- ♦The site received the first-ever *netConnect* Award for a small public library web site in June 2002.



Library staff, Friends, trustees and community participate in a two-day Future Search conference in 2001.

Even though remaining on the cutting edge of technological advancement has become a hallmark of Worthington Libraries, the people it serves have always been the library's highest priority. And, in order to serve people well, the library staff must be interested and engaged in their work. Library director Meribah Mansfield strives to develop and involve the staff as much as possible in both the day-to-day operation and

improvement of the Library and setting the course for its future.

In the spring of 2001, the library's Leadership Group, comprised of key administration staff and all professional librarians, presented a "Trend Tracking" analysis to the Board of Trustees. Prior to their presentation, the Leadership Group explored several areas of anticipated change in the library field and popular culture over the next 10 years and beyond. These included education, teen lifestyles, employment trends, demographics and new technology, among others.

On March 27-28, 2001, Worthington Libraries invited the entire community to attend a Future Search conference. Sponsored by the Friends of Worthington Libraries, each session (two each day) was

facilitated by an expert in strategic planning for libraries and focused on the future of library services and the changing role of libraries. Designed to foster group participation and discussion, each session was different. The first focused on the library's history and provided conference participants with a sense of perspective before looking ahead to new ideas. Over 130 members of the community, library staff, Friends and board attended and provided insightful feedback about what they wanted or envisioned in an ideal library. The Library used the information gleaned during Future Search to develop a new strategic plan for the next four years.

This strategic plan reaffirms the library's mission but also includes a brand-new vision statement developed by a team of staff, board members and Friends. It reads:

"Worthington Libraries serve as community centers dedicated to lifelong learning, the exploration of ideas and cultural exchange. As a vital part of the diverse community they serve, the libraries capitalize on opportunities to build innovative partnerships and aggressively promote services and programs. The libraries keep promises made to the community by exhibiting careful stewardship of resources and demonstrating fiscal responsibility through the collections and services provided."

One of the goals of the library's strategic plan is to provide service to residents in the northeast portion of its service district, an area known as the Far North. In 1995, to fulfill a 1992 levy promise, the Library purchased almost four acres of land in the Far North to preserve the option of building a library there in the future. At the time, this area was mostly devoted to farming. Now, it's home to a new and thriving community of young families that continues to grow by leaps and bounds.

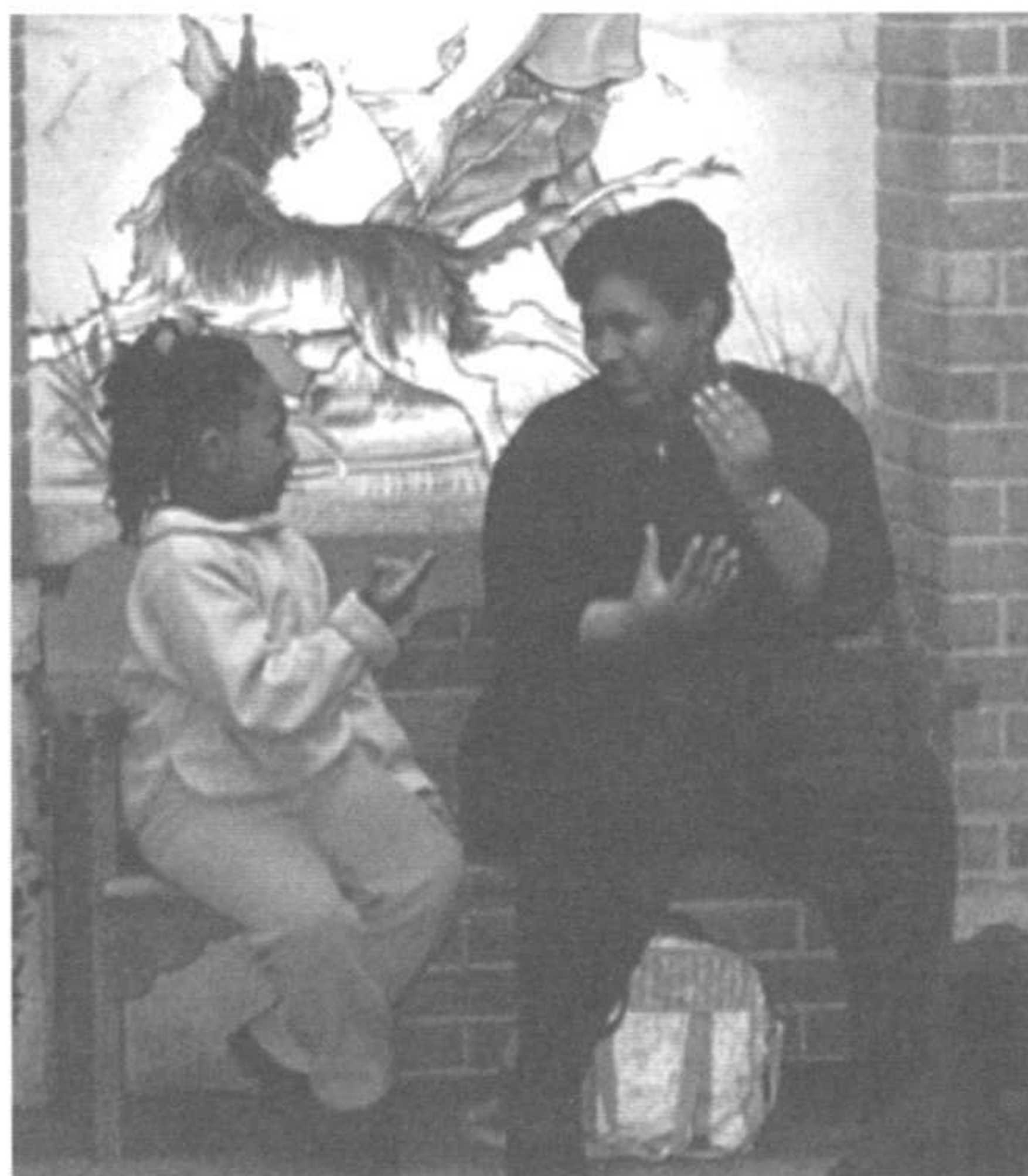
In 2001, people living in the Far North began to actively campaign for a library of their own. The 1992 levy did not include funds to build, stock or operate a facility. Voters would need to pass an additional operating levy for Worthington Libraries to provide a library in the Far North.

In an effort to make the Far North Library a reality, the Library explored several partnership opportunities, including one with the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) to cluster a library with a new recreation center to be built on land adjacent directly east of the library site. Input from the community indicated that this would make for a dynamic and heavily-used "super community center," with good pedestrian access from surrounding homes, a local park and elementary school.

The Library today...



Above: Kids love to explore talking books in the children's technology lab at Old Worthington Library.



Above: A child and her caregiver use sign language to communicate during Northwest Library's Stories & Sign program.

Below: CyberSchool computer courses are offered on the State Library of Ohio's Mobile Computer Training Lab (a/k/a the "CyberBus").

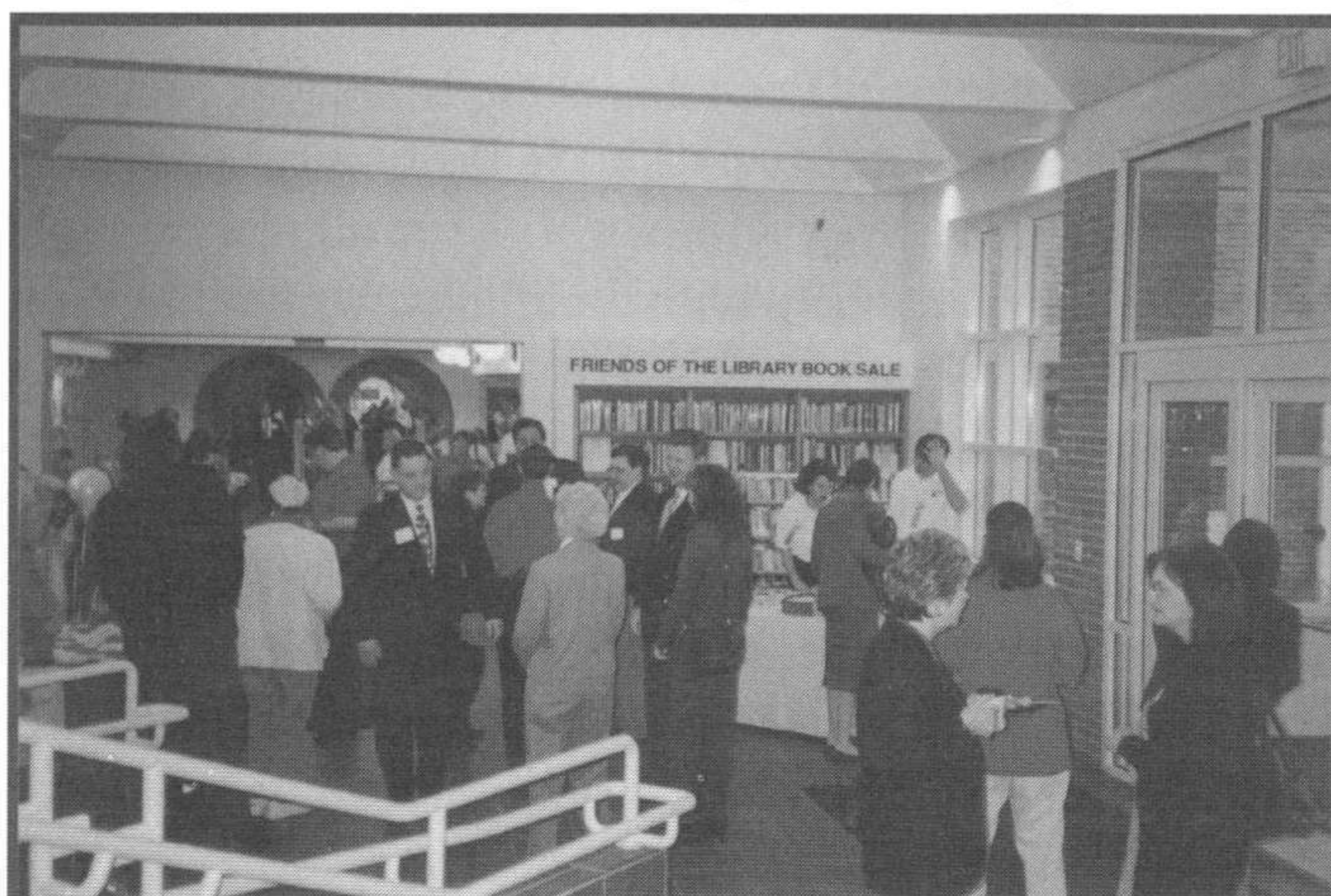


Right: Local teens attend a comic book publishing program presented by local artists and comic shop owners.



Left: The typical bookdrop scene that greets the circulation staff on Monday morning.

Below: Guests mingle in the lobby of Old Worthington Library during the 2001 Community Breakfast during National Library Week.



The library board agreed to work with architects selected by CRPD to prepare a building program and design schematic for the possible Far North Library. This building plan was presented to the community at a public forum held in June 2001.

Unfortunately, in the midst of all this planning and thinking about the future, libraries in Ohio were dealt a heavy and somewhat surprising blow by the state government when library funding received through the Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF) was reduced.

In July 2001, Ohio Governor Bob Taft signed a budget that froze the LLGSF at its current funding level, subtracting millions of dollars from the state's libraries. Reductions in LLGSF funding are a direct result of lower income tax revenue and the legislature's decision to move funding for the Ohio Public Library Information Network from the state's General Revenue Fund to the LLGSF.

The LLGSF represents about half of the Worthington Libraries budget, so any funding freeze or cut has an impact. Plans to build an additional facility to serve the Far North area have been temporarily put on hold.

As state and national economies continued to struggle, library use increased, putting an even greater demand on limited finances.

In 2002, library circulation increased 10% and passed the two million items mark for the first time in history. Despite budget cuts, the Library was able to provide several new services to patrons during this year.

On February 1, Worthington Libraries joined with CLEVNET, a Cleveland-area library consortium, to become the first library system outside northeast Ohio to provide KnowItNow24X7 reference service.

KnowItNow24X7 and its companion site for kids, HomeworkNow, is a live online reference service provided by professional librarians equipped with all the resources available at the Library (both print and digital). The service is available to patrons in the library's service district 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. HomeworkNow allows kids to access a librarian whenever they need help with their homework—like 6 pm on a Sunday night when the Library is closed.

In only one year of providing this service, Worthington Libraries patrons generated 20% of all questions and received 6,700 responses.

In April 2002, Worthington Libraries launched Worthington Memory, www.worthingtonmemory.org, an online scrapbook of Worthington history materials and a collaborative project with the Worthington Historical Society.

The goals of Worthington Memory are to preserve and increase access to local history materials through digitization of historical documents, images and objects.

Worthington Memory activities include digital imaging of historic documents and photographs, creation of a searchable online index to local 19th and 20th century newspapers available on microfilm at the Old Worthington Library, virtual tours of historic house museums and oral histories. Community members are now being asked to share their own local history treasures, which will be scanned and included on the Worthington Memory site.

As with so many library activities, volunteers are a key component in the success of Worthington Memory. Throughout its history the Library has relied on volunteer assistance, and today a strong corps of adult and teen volunteers assist nearly all library departments with a wide variety of projects.

June 2002 brought additional concerns about the library's funding situation, and the Library hosted a series of six professionally-facilitated focus groups for key community leaders to update them on library funding and to ask questions regarding the library's future direction. Participants included former board members, community activists and representatives from the city, schools and local businesses. The focus groups, attended by approximately 60 people, concluded with an open community presentation on June 26, 2002. This communication process helped the Library decide not to pursue an additional operating levy in 2002.

In the months leading up to the focus groups, several community issues had come to the forefront as the Library was not only being pressured to build a new facility to serve Far North residents but also to take over ownership of the former library building at 752 High Street.

In June 2001, school administrative offices moved to a new building, and 752 High Street was left vacant. Even though the Library had not occupied the building since 1979 many people still thought of it as the "old library" and wanted to see it returned to its original owners and, no doubt, its original state.

Public support for this was tremendous, with many people writing letters to the local papers advising the schools to simply "give the building back to the Library." The Worthington Schools estimated the selling price of the building to be \$600,000 and the Library estimated that an additional \$1 million would be necessary to make the property ADA compliant.

The purchase of the building at 752 High Street might have been included in a levy package along with a Far North Library, but once the

board decided not to pursue a levy in 2002, plans to buy the building were put on indefinite hold. The Worthington Schools tried to auction the property, but no buyer was found. As of this writing, the former library remains vacant.

In addition to the hold on levy plans, an additional setback for extending library service to the Far North resulted from the library's thwarted attempt to establish a partnership with the Delaware County District Library.

The Delaware County District Library is to the immediate north of the Worthington Libraries service district and the land owned by the Library is only one half-mile south of the Delaware County line. Delaware County is now one of the fastest growing counties in the country. When the Library purchased its land in 1995, southern Delaware County was devoted to rural farming. Now it's the site of major economic development as the City of Columbus sprawls north.

Through research, the Library determined 25% of its patrons are coming from the Delaware County library district to use the two existing Worthington Libraries. Since the new library would be even closer to the Delaware County border, it was obvious that it too would be used by a large number of Delaware County residents. Since its partnership with the Columbus Metropolitan Library to build and manage Northwest Library is very successful, the Library was hopeful it could replicate it with another library system.

Since 2001, Worthington Libraries has made several attempts to meet and discuss a partnership with the board of the Delaware County District Library. While individual board members and the directors from both library systems were able to have amenable discussions, the board of the Delaware County District Library has thus far rejected proposals for a joint meeting.

This isn't the first time the Library has had to contend with use by residents living outside its service district. An entry in the Board of Trustees meeting minutes from January 12, 1925 reads, "A discussion followed as to the use of the Library by the residents of Perry, Washington, Liberty, Orange and Clinton Townships and Delaware Co. and it was decided to ask Trustees of same to contribute to support of (the) Library."

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department is now faced with severe budget cuts and has put off building the community center adjacent to the library's land. The Delaware County District Library may someday open a library in the southern portion of the county, but for now

remains steadfast in its refusal to partner with Worthington Libraries. The library staff is currently investigating alternative methods of providing service to the Far North.

In early 2003, the library board again discussed the timing for a future levy. Since the state funding reductions took effect, library budget projections showed that 2003 would be the first year the organization would take in less money than it spent. Revenue would continue to fall short of expenses until the Library exhausted its cash reserves in 2007. This is a library that prides itself on good stewardship and both the board and director found this situation not just regrettable, but unacceptable.

At their annual retreat in February, the board of trustees unanimously decided the Library would have a balanced budget in 2003, without cutting services to the public until it became absolutely necessary. As the Library had managed to cut expenses by nearly 5% in 2002, it was felt the same could be achieved with a more rigorous and thorough approach.

Reflecting the philosophy of the entire board, one trustee said, "You don't cut service as a public relations move, you do it only when there's no other way."

Reduced state funding continues to be an issue for the Library as the current biennium budget, signed by the Governor on June 30, 2003, continues to provide Ohio's libraries with 5.7% of the personal income tax or the freeze amount, whichever is less. Ohio libraries are now operating on funding levels similar to what they received in 1998.

Worthington Libraries' present plan is to make the current property tax levy last as long as possible before approaching voters for any additional operating funds.

Now in its third century of existence, the Library ironically once again faces the same set of challenges as those met by the library boards and staff of yesterday. How do you balance a growing demand for service with a reduced budget?



The Friends Annual Market Day Book Sale on the Village Green in 1973. The sale is still held every September.

Chapter Eight

The Friends of Worthington Libraries

"I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture, and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries."

—Carl Sagan

The Friends of Worthington Libraries was first established in 1972 as a support group for the Library. It was the first Friends organization in Franklin County.

The Friends raised money through memberships and book sales to offset the costs of library programs such as author visits and special events. The group's signature event was an annual book sale on the Village Green held in conjunction with Worthington's September Market Day celebration. The Friends also served as an advocacy group for the Library.

The first board members of the Friends of Worthington Libraries were:

Mrs. Jack Frost, President
Mrs. Daniel Snyder, Vice-President
Miss Barbara Byko, Treasurer
Mrs. Ralph Jamison, Secretary

The Friends maintained a strong presence in the community in 1973 and 1974 when the library was on the ballot, and served as a support group and volunteer base for the staff and director. In addition to raising money, the Friends also presented programs and offered babysitting services to parents attending library events. In essence, they provided help wherever and whenever it was needed.

The Library was without a Friends group from the early '80s until 1992, when new library director Meribah Mansfield encouraged library supporters to reestablish the organization. Many members of the earlier Friends group were still eager to serve the Library and the upcoming November levy gave them a renewed sense of purpose which helped them quickly grow their membership base and overall support for the Library.

In 1994, the Friends of Worthington Libraries was honored with a Friends Group of the Year Award from the Ohio Library Council.

During the construction of Northwest Library and renovation of Old Worthington Library, the Friends provided volunteer hours, moral support and ever-appreciated food to the staff.

In the last 11 years, the Friends have been fortunate to count many dedicated individuals among their ranks, including William McNutt (former library trustee), Carol Verny (former library staff member) and Beverly Seigel. All helped the group maintain consistency and ride out rough times when membership and support waned.

In 2003, the Friends number roughly 400 members, and the organization provides more than \$30,000 in annual support to the Library, including full support of summer reading programs for children, teens and adults. The Friends also pay for one staff member to attend the American Library Association annual conference each year, provide food for staff celebrations, support the annual Community Breakfast held during National Library Week and continue to provide additional help whenever and wherever needed.

In 2002, the Friends established the Worthington Libraries Endowment Fund at The Columbus Foundation with a \$10,000 contribution. The endowment fund has allowed the Library to pursue a rigorous fundraising and development plan and will serve as an alternate source of income in years to come. The establishment of the endowment fund would not have been possible without the initial contribution from the Friends, showing once again how valuable and important they are to the overall health and growth of the Library.

Today, the Friends board is made up of 10 individuals from all walks of life including a librarian, marketing executive, research scientist, financial planner, high school principal and lawyer.

About to embark on a marketing campaign of their own, the Friends continue to raise money through memberships and book sales, including their signature sale on the Village Green still held as part of Worthington's annual Market Day celebration.

Chapter Nine

The Board of Trustees

“Service is the rent you pay for room on this earth.”—Shirley Chisolm

Since 1803, over 130 men and women have served Worthington Libraries as board members. Although individual terms are now limited to seven years, many trustees, such as Mary Virginia Harding and Mary C. Welling, gave more than a decade of service to the Library.

Board members are volunteers and as such, receive no compensation for their work—and work it is. Difficult and, at times, unpopular decisions are made by the library board and they have suffered the consequences, both good and bad, of those decisions.

The first group of library trustees reads like a who's who of the Scioto Company. Names like James Kilbourne, Ezra Griswold and Zophar Topping can be recalled by any local student as those brave men who settled Worthington 200 years ago. The fact that these intrepid souls who came west to make a home in an untamed land also thought to establish a library within the first days of their arrival is the stuff of legend and forms the foundation of the library's long history of community service.

After the Stanbery Library faded from existence, library service in Worthington was irregular until the women of the Fortnightly Club agreed to take over operation of the Worthington Reading Room and Library in 1903. Unlike the present library board, which plays the vital role of representing the public and establishing policies, the Fortnightly Club assumed complete responsibility for all library operations including fundraising, collection development, cleaning and book repair. They made the curtains for the Library, waxed floors and dusted shelves. When it came time to plan a special event, they made all the food and even the crafts to be sold. They were tireless in their dedication and drive to keep a library in Worthington. When the Fortnightly Club decided to incorporate the Library in 1908, many of its members went on to serve on the board of the Worthington Public Library Association.

The board of the Worthington Public Library Association was faced with almost insurmountable challenges and setbacks. The Library was outgrowing its space above the Leasure Drug Store, had limited funds available and was unable to find a donor willing to support a library building in Worthington. Twice they contacted the Carnegie Foundation

and twice they were turned down. As the library budget was less than \$1,000 per year, board members donated both money and books to supplement the library's collection.

When the association agreed to establish the Library as a school district library in 1925, many board members, including Vance Smith and Caroline Ward, remained.

Two years after forming the Worthington Public Library, the community finally received its first dedicated library building on the Village Green at 752 High Street. This building, though a blessing for the growing population, was plagued by problems that included severe flooding in the basement every time it rained, roof damage, faulty ceiling tiles and poor heating. Many board meetings were spent addressing building concerns and board members were often assigned the task of negotiating with builders and repairmen.

In the 1970s, when the first attempts were made to move the library from its home on the Village Green, it was the board of trustees who bore the brunt of the public's outrage. Letters to the editor attacked them personally and even demanded their resignations. It was a very difficult time to be a board member, to say the least, but they remained respectful to the public and steadfast in their commitment to providing the community with better library service.

The board's patience with the community and resolve to find a solution was finally realized when the Library successfully moved from the Village Green to a new building on Hartford Street in 1979.

When the Library once again failed in its attempt to pass a levy in 1990, it did nothing to dampen the spirits of the board. Rather than consider a library levy a lost cause, they chose instead to form a Citizens Advisory Committee to study the community's library service needs and determine the best course of action for passing a library levy in Worthington.

In 1992, the Library passed its first levy, making it possible to advance services at its present location, build the Northwest Library and preserve the option of providing service to the northeast portion of its service district. Due to the board's fiscally-prudent management strategies, the Library has been able to grow and advance its mission for the past 12 years without putting another levy on the ballot.

Today's library board is once again faced with a growing community and demand for additional service coupled with a reduced budget. How this group of seven volunteers responds to these challenges will establish the course of the library's future.

Each set of board members throughout the library's history has been faced with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Every decision made was not a wise decision; being human, board members made mistakes and, at times, failed to respond accurately to community needs. What makes them unique is that they didn't allow themselves to be defined by these mistakes. Instead, all members of the Worthington Libraries Boards of Trustees are best remembered for their perseverance, dedication and passion for everything a public library is and can be.

The Staff of Worthington Libraries



*Always willing to go
the extra mile, then
and now.*



Chapter Nine

The Staff

"There is such joy in doing work well."—Kay Stepkin

In its early days, the Library had no actual staff. Although someone was always designated to care for and distribute books, an actual paid librarian didn't emerge on the scene until the Fortnightly Club hired B. C. McCullough in 1903.

In subsequent years, library directors and the library staff were hired as much for their charm and graciousness with the public than any actual ability. Although they proved to be quite capable, they learned skills as needed on the job.

The first trained librarian was Dorothy Grove Foutts, who was hired as a cataloger in 1937. She went on to replace Rose Little as library director in 1938. One can clearly see the impact of a trained librarian as the collection was vigorously weeded for the first time, collections for children and young people were developed and summer story hours began. Dorothy Foutts also streamlined operations so that staff could spend less time on menial tasks and more time working with patrons, visiting schools and attending to professional responsibilities.

Even before Dorothy Foutts was hired, however, the library board did what it could to enhance staff training and encouraged staff to attend meetings throughout the county and state. The Library joined the American Library Association and the Ohio Library Trustees Association in 1931.

In 1940, the board hired the library's first trained children's librarian, Miss Jean Darby. The first young adult librarian, Miss Marguerite Carder, was hired in 1945. Miss Carder has the distinction of being the first young adult librarian hired by any library in Franklin County. Nearly 10 years later, the Worthington Public Library would remain the only area library with a trained young adult specialist on staff. Clearly the board and library director were interested in providing the Worthington community with the best staff and service available.

In 1945, library director Elma Whitney was described as believing "that a library is just as active, vigorous and wide awake as its staff. She is therefore a joiner and carries on a great deal of outside activity...most

of which is done on her own free time. These include: Vice Presidency of the Ohio Library Association; Past Presidency and Present Secretary of the Franklin County Librarians Council; Program Chairman of the Newcomer's Club; Press Reporter for the Women's Club; and weekly radio book reviews." She also served as board president of the Public Employees Retirement System and was regularly asked to speak at library conferences and meetings held throughout the state and country. Elma Whitney's resume was impressive, having previously served as library director in Euclid, Ohio and an instructor in library science at Denison University. She placed an emphasis on providing service to adults in addition to maintaining the stellar children's programs started by Dorothy Foutts and Mary Elizabeth Kirns (who replaced Dorothy Foutts in 1941).

Elma Whitney stepped up the library's community involvement and began to provide assistance to community organizations and clubs and enlarged the collection regularly distributed to Harding Hospital. She also kept up the weekly book column in the *Worthington News* that was begun by Dorothy Foutts.

In the 1950s, the library's staff room included a cot for naps, suggesting that the staff was both dedicated and worn out. The reward for their hard work was growing circulation and attendance at library programs.

When Elma Whitney retired in 1967, she was replaced by Bernice Cudd Daniels. Bernice Daniels continued many programs while placing her own "brand" on the Library. She was a devoted fan of efficiency and did everything she could to ensure the Library made the best use of its collection, staff and financial resources. She, too, was also very involved in the Ohio library community.

Despite the fact that Mrs. Daniels tried unsuccessfully to pass a levy in 1973, 1974 and 1990, she did succeed in moving the Library from its long-time home on the Village Green to a brand-new building on Hartford Street. She also brought computers, CDs and a computerized catalog to the Library and trained the staff to present information literacy programs to the public. Bernice also knew how to find dedicated people as several staff members she hired more than 20 years ago are still working at the Library today!

In 1991, Bernice Daniels retired and was replaced by Meribah Mansfield, the present director of Worthington Libraries.

Mrs. Mansfield also came to the Library with an impressive background of library leadership having served as director of the Fairfield County District Library and director of the main branch of the Columbus

Metropolitan Library. In less than 11 months, she managed to accomplish what no library director had been able to do before her. She passed a levy and won community approval for a second location to serve the northwest portion of the library's service district.

Meribah Mansfield's service to the Library is best exemplified by her dedication to the community. As was the case with Elma Whitney, she is also a joiner and has served as president of the Ohio Library Association, chair of the Ohio Library Council Board of Trustees, and member of the the Worthington Economic Development Committee, Worthington Bicentennial Steering Committee and Worthington Area Business and Professional Women's Association. She was recognized for her community involvement with Leadership Worthington's Leadership for a Lifetime Award in 1999. In 2003, her professional achievements were recognized when she was selected as the Ohio Library Council's Librarian of the Year.

The Library now prides itself on the high number of professional librarians it employs. Since 1991, this number has increased from 10 to 33 and every attempt is made to find the best and brightest individuals to fill vacant positions. In addition, each staff member is encouraged to play an active role in the library community and in Worthington. In 2003, 26 staff members were involved with more than 70 community, civic and professional organizations.

In addition to traditional library titles, the library staff of more than 120 individuals now boasts positions unheard of in previous years such as, webmaster, network administrator, community relations/development coordinator, human resources coordinator and facilities manager.

In recent years, the staff has participated in trend tracking, played a key role in developing the library's strategic plan and underwent a major reorganization.

Now, as the Library looks to the future and the possibility of another levy campaign and expansion of services to Far North, the staff will be heavily involved with planning and developing new services to take the Library into the next generation of leadership and growth—in addition to providing hundreds of programs each year, checking out millions of items and providing exemplary service to the community.

Conclusion

In 2003, the Library was an active participant in the Worthington Bicentennial Celebration. We hosted events, served on various committees and built a float for the July 4th Homecoming Parade.

Two centuries is a substantial length of time, bringing changes to Worthington, the United States and the world.

200 years ago, the Worthington library was a small collection of books brought by ox cart to a wilderness settlement at the western edge of the United States.

Since 1803, the Library has both endured and reflected all of society's changes and major events, from western expansion to the Great Depression, from world wars to man's first walk on the moon, from the sexual revolution to the digital age, the Library has provided people with information, rejuvenation and respite.

The longevity of library service in Worthington is due to its dedicated citizens and the understanding that, in order for a community to grow and respond effectively to change, people must be educated. The notion that a library is not a luxury, but a necessity is prominently threaded through the tapestry that is Worthington and remains as evident today as it was in 1803.

If the Scioto Company were to arrive in Worthington today, they would find it a changed, but still familiar place.

The Village Green remains dedicated to their founding principles of religion, education and lifelong learning. James Kilbourne's home still stands on High Street, and the Library he always dreamed of, that his granddaughter helped support, has grown from a tiny frontier library to a nationally-recognized library system, circulating more than two million items each year.

The future library will no doubt continue to build on its unique history as it faces challenges both familiar and new. In the next few years alone, service may be extended to the Far North, additional funding will be sought and the Library will continue to advance its mission.

The story beyond will be written by another library director, another board and a new staff. If the last 200 years is any indication of what the future holds, it's sure to be a fabulous read.

Annual Library Circulation

Annual circulation figures were not routinely reported until 1927.

1913	3,636	1953	118,836	1993	1,128,646
1914	7,582	1954	116,685	1994	1,134,938
1915	9,825	1955	102,138	1995	1,131,321
1916	9,154	1956	***75,870	1996	1,271,180
1917	incomplete	1957	111,054	1997	1,439,853
1918	12,573	1958	127,091	1998	1,557,115
1919	14,246	1959	154,327	1999	1,663,835
1920	incomplete	1960	169,462	2000	1,727,834
1921	14,280	1961	185,795	2001	1,940,829
1922	13,817	1962	188,549	2002	2,137,211
1923	11,527	1963	210,556	2003	2,222,225
1924	incomplete	1964	232,712		
1925	incomplete	1965	249,606		
1926	incomplete	1966	****244,661		
1927	*9,492	1967	234,170		
1928	20,826	1968	261,564		
1929	25,462	1969	286,246		
1930	31,572	1970	293,978		
1931	**27,825	1971	306,631		
1932	32,443	1972	314,258		
1933	28,108	1973	296,907		
1934	28,908	1974	311,346		
1935	18,921	1975	338,699		
1936	22,408	1976	336,835		
1937	21,753	1977	334,585		
1938	29,695	1978	338,246		
1939	36,759	1979	341,648		
1940	39,200	1980	458,245		
1941	45,649	1981	503,246		
1942	46,937	1982	569,033		
1943	46,910	1983	598,115		
1944	50,416	1984	616,125		
1945	51,864	1985	670,344		
1946	58,371	1986	703,742		
1947	57,918	1987	814,500		
1948	62,926	1988	912,292		
1949	76,590	1989	944,644		
1950	85,048	1990	1,028,415		
1951	91,837	1991	1,051,733		
1952	113,252	1992	1,094,995		

*The library was closed for several months as it moved to a new location at 752 High Street.

**Due to construction, the library was closed for 3 months in 1931. When it reopened, monthly circulation reached an all-time high of 3,000.

***Circulation drop caused by building program. The Library was closed in August 1955 and children's books were out of circulation from November 1955-September 1956.

****The change-over to a 28-day book charge on June 1, 1965 reduced turnover of book stock and eliminated the renewal count in circulation. Circulation figures for the first five months of 1966 were affected by this policy.

Library Trustees

Stanbery Library (1803-?)

Samuel Beach
Ezra Griswold
Nathaniel Little
James Kilbourne
Nathan Stewart
William Thompson
Josiah Topping
Zophar Topping

Worthington Reading Room (1897-1902)

Harry Brand
Walter Bell
C. L. Dickey
Margaret Flickinger
J. D. Harlor
Stella Gardner
Ruth Griswold
W. C. Lewis
Justin Pinney
Colonel H. P. Ward

Fortnightly Club (1902-1908)

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Alberta R. Cless
Mrs. Foster
Mrs. Harry Gruver
Mrs. Kumler
Mrs. H. P. McAdam
Mrs. J. M. Milne
Mrs. Allen O. Myers
Helen T. Parsons
Mary Phinney
Mrs. B. C. McCullough
Mrs. E. J. Nelson
Daisy M. Ricketts
Caroline P. Ward
Mary C. Welling
Mary Wing

Worthington Public Library Association (1908-1925)

E. S. Albaugh
Frank E. Archer
William Butler
Alberta R. Cless
Cornelia Corbin
E. J. Cummins
P. C. Fuller
Mrs. Carl Gay
H. S. Gruver
Mrs. Herschler
Homer C. Hockett
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Dr. William Stierhoff
Daisy M. Ricketts
Caroline P. Ward
Mary Warner
Mary C. Welling*
B. S. Wellman
W. S. Wilson
Mrs. F. H. Wright

*Served as trustee from 1902-1924

Worthington Public Library (1925-2003)

Everett Antrim
Frank E. Archer
Scott A. Armour
Mrs. James Baker
David B. Barnhart
Cham W. Bell
Jennifer Best
L. Richard Bradley
Mrs. Charles Chaney
Gregg A. Christenson
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Frank Corbin
Anne Cramer
W. Charles Curley
Spencer Davis
Floyd Dixon
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George Finneran
James P. Friedt
Byron Ford
Cheryl Foster
Mrs. Gerald Frost
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Florence Gay
Mrs. George T. (Mary) Harding, III
William Heim
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Father Anthony Kleinschmidt
Donald B. Leach
Dennis R. Lewis
Dr. Claude Longenecker
Amos J. Loveday, Jr.
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Jeffrey Lyttle
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Virginia McDougale
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William A. McNutt
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Howard O. Merriman
Stanley Michota
Michael Minister
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Mrs. L. E. Turton
Caroline P. Ward
Bernice Warner
Cleon Webb
B. S. Wellman
D. S. Wickersham
F. H. Wright
Valeria Wright
John Young

Head Librarians/Library Directors

Zophar Topping (1803-?)

Bessie Herrman (1897-1899)

Lucy Johnson (1899-1902)

B. C. McCullough (1903-1908)

Grace Robinson (1908-1914)

Helen T. Parsons (1915-1918)

Rose O. Little (1918-1937)

Dorothy Grove Foutts (1938-1941)

Mary Elizabeth Kirns (1941-1943)

Elma Whitney (1943-1967)

Bernice E. Cudd Daniels (1967-1991)

Meribah A. Mansfield (1991-Present)

Photo/Image Credits

Opposite Introduction Page

James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building at 752 High Street after 1956 expansion. *Worthington Libraries.*

Opposite Dedication Page

Interior of James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building at 752 High Street prior to 1956 expansion. *Worthington Libraries.*

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Portrait of James Kilbourne, artist unknown. Used by permission. *Courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.*

Page 10

Plat of sections 2 and 3 of Sharon Township. The map pictured here was drawn based on James Kilbourn(e)'s survey of the area. On the back is written, "A Plat of the town of Worthington as laid off by the Proprietors and including the second and third Sections of the Second Township in the 18th Range of the United States Military Lands in the State of Ohio. Dated at Worthington, Aug. 11, 1804, James Kilbourn(e), Agent and Surveyor for the Company." Used by permission. *Courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.*

Page 14

Photo of Helen B. Robinson dated 1901. Used by permission. *Courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.*

Photo of unidentified group in front of The Hotel Central. Used by permission. *Courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.*

Fortnightly Club minutes book cover and pages one and two of club constitution. *Worthington Libraries.*

Page 20

The Welling family is pictured in front of Dr. David Welling's residence at the northeast corner of New England Avenue and High Street. Standing (left to right) are David Welling Jr., Park Welling, Gussie Welling, Ben Beazell and Frank Welling. Seated (left to right) are Florence Welling, Mary Welling, Grandmother McCoy, Edna Beazell, Faith Welling and Preston Beazell. Dr. David Welling was a prominent physician in Worthington for many years. He served in the Civil War, and then returned and attended the Ohio Central Normal School, Otterbein College and the Eclectic Medical Institute in Cincinnati. Frank Welling, his son, was a repository of Worthington history, who died in 1977 at the age of 91. He was a self-taught artist who painted many local scenes. Used by permission. *Courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.*

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Photo of the downtown Worthington business district shows 671-673 High Street, built in 1821. The Wright home and store stands between Dr. James Hill's house and Tuller's Grocery. Hitching posts are still located in front of the stores while the tracks for the interurban rail system are seen in the foreground. Used by permission. *Courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.*

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The James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building, circa 1930. The Worthington Public Library got this first home of its own in 1927, when Elizabeth Jones Deshler donated money for this building to be constructed in memory of her grandfather, Colonel James Kilbourne. Four years later, she donated money to build the library's north and south wings. Used by permission. *Courtesy of the Worthington Historical Society.*

The James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building after its 1956 expansion.
Worthington Libraries.

Page 27

Children's librarian Jean Darby with a group of children gathered on the steps of the James Kilbourne Memorial Library Building in August 1940. *Worthington Libraries.*

Page 30

Library director Elma Whitney with a group of library trustees, November 1956.
Worthington Libraries.

The James Kilbourne Memorial Library at 752 High Street in 1953. *Worthington Libraries.*

Pages 34-35

Jane Saliaris conducts a belly dancing program at the library in 1977.
Worthington Libraries.

Staff at groundbreaking ceremony for new library in 1978. *Worthington Libraries.*

Old Rectory being moved from Hartford Street to make room for new library.
Worthington Libraries.

The Worthington Public Library at 805 Hartford Street in 1979. *Worthington Libraries.*

Librarian Rachel Alexander at Worthington Public Library Children's Desk.
Worthington Libraries.

Page 35

Unidentified children using new Apple II computers installed in the Library in 1981. Note the television set serving as monitor. *Worthington Libraries.*

Page 38

Tabulating votes. Library trustee Bill McNutt with Library Director Meribah Mansfield in 1992. *Worthington Libraries.*

Page 42

Three photos detailing the construction of Northwest Library at 2280 Hard Road. *Worthington Libraries.*

Page 43

Three photos detail the roof replacements and renovation of Old Worthington Library. The final photo shows the Library (facing Stafford Avenue) as it looks today. *Worthington Libraries.*

Page 45

Sign posted on the Village Green inviting community to attend the grand opening of Worthington Libraries Online on March 14, 2001. *Worthington Libraries.*

Page 46

Two-day Future Search conference held in March 2001 at the Clarion Hotel in Worthington. *Worthington Libraries.*

Pages 48-49

Group of children using computers in Old Worthington Library's Children's Technology Area. *Worthington Libraries.*

Child and caregiver at Northwest Library's Stories and Sign storytime session. *Worthington Libraries.*

State Library of Ohio's Mobile Computer Training Lab in front of Old Worthington Library in October 2003. *Worthington Libraries.*

Group of teens at comic book program in October 2002. *Worthington Libraries.*

Book drop. *Worthington Libraries.*

2001 community breakfast attendees gather in the lobby of Old Worthington Library. *Worthington Libraries.*

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Friends of Worthington Libraries annual book sale on the Village Green in 1973.
Worthington Libraries.

Page 60 (top to bottom)

Margaret Jones and Norma Mills using the new charging machine in January 1968. *Worthington Libraries.*

Jean Ogg and Karen Brown, circa 1975. *Worthington Libraries.*

Worthington Bookies perform puppet theatre at the Worthington Ice Cream Social in August 1977. *Worthington Libraries.*

Librarian Michael Blackwell participates in the "Fun Flush," a carnival game featured at the 2000 Volunteer thank-you party. *Worthington Libraries.*

Staff participates in the first Harry Potter Day held at Old Worthington Library in 2001. *Worthington Libraries.*

Worthington Public Library

62

820 High Street
Worthington, OH 43085

WORTHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



128 171 6397

Does Not Circulate

**“We have laid a foundation, as I trust,
for a flourishing library.”**

—James Kilbourne,

in a letter to Thomas Worthington, February 1804

It has now been 200 years since Worthington founder James Kilbourne penned the above words to Thomas Worthington.

At the time, Kilbourne and the rest of the Scioto Company had only recently arrived from Granby, Connecticut to begin life anew in Worthington, Ohio. The fact that the city's founders established the community's first library, the Stanbery subscription library, just weeks after their arrival speaks volumes about their commitment to education and learning.

Two centuries later, Worthington Libraries, as it is now called, has grown to become a nationally-recognized library system.

This book traces the history of the Library, from its early beginnings through the present and, in doing so, reveals the strength, character and perseverance of the community it serves.

**All proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated
to the Worthington Libraries Endowment Fund.**

**Publication of this book was made possible
through the generosity of the Friends of Worthington Libraries.**