

# Fifty years - plus - for librarian Mrs. Watson

Exactly 50 years ago (as recorded in the column on the editorial page) Isabel Watson was engaged as librarian and one of her qualifications was the fact she had already

worked at the library for several years before, leaving when she married. So her career as the town's fifth librarian not only spans the past five decades, but also

the years she worked as assistant during her high school years and then working years before marriage.

After her appointment exactly five decades ago she went to work in January 1926 in the small room in the town hall. It was so small that customers couldn't range over the shelves picking out their own books. Instead, they ordered them over the counter from printed catalogues for many years.

In 1934 the library moved from the town hall into the Y.M.C.A. The library occupied quarters on the left hand side off the main Y entrance, which has been completely changed into offices now.

**Packed**  
Here there were closely-spaced rows and rows of books from floor to ceiling, and it was delightful for children to disappear in the back corners and turn over pages of interesting books unseen.

The place became packed with volumes and the library board long had a dream of new quarters. This came true in 1967 when the splendid new library building was erected as the town's centennial project. Location was a corner of the school property.

First sod for the project was turned by Mrs. Watson, of course.

**Started**  
It was in first form high school that Isabel Elliott began to work at the library. She recalls she would have been 13 or 14 at the time. Margaret Wilson had been the assistant to librarian Lettie Scott, but the Wilsons moved away from the Presbyterian manse and young Isabel took over the job.

She finished school and took a position in Wiles' confectionery and ice cream parlor, still continuing to work in the library. The Wiles let her

have library nights off.

Then the library was open three nights a week, Monday, Wednesday and Saturdays from 7 to 8.30 p.m.

A catalogue was printed with the names of the books, and patrons would select their books from lists rather than searching on the shelves.

**Resigned**  
In 1921 Isabel Elliott married Perry Watson and retired from both her posts. Then, when son Tom was a toddler, she applied to work in the library again. The board promptly chose her over the other applicants, worthy as they all were. She began again January 1, 1926, and has been there ever since.

Lettie Scott had left, since she was working full-time at Beardmore. She is still living in Kitchener.

Mrs. Watson's first assistant was Lettie Scott's sister Laura Scott, who is now in a nursing home in Galt.

**Assistants**  
Assistants over the years have been Mary Chalmers, Oral Norton, Helen Lamb, Madge Chapman, and now Esther Taylor, Eileen New and Margaret Merrin. Miss Taylor has been on the staff for years, too.

**First one**  
The first librarian in town was Lettie Laird, who began in 1898 at a salary of \$40 a year. As Mrs. R. M. MacDonald she lived in town all her life and died a couple of years ago, over 90 years of age.

**Second librarian** was Ethel Coleman, who was there at the time of World War One. Then came Lettie Scott, followed by Mrs. Watson, giving these four librarians a span of service of 78 years.

Mrs. Watson's starting salary in 1926 was \$10 a month.

The job became a full time one last year. The library is closed Monday and open on

the other weekdays including Saturdays.

At one time the librarians used to take books to the schools, Mrs. Watson remembers. She and Esther Taylor and Madge Chapman would load books into taxis and head for the Robert Little and M. Z. Bennett schools before the schools had such good reading facilities of their own. They checked out volumes for children in all grades.

Now the children use the school libraries and flock to the town library, too. And their use of the facilities has changed. Projects are a major part of the curriculum, and the students need help in finding material.

Now they also have a reference room downstairs in the new library where they can read and copy facts from the big volumes.

Mrs. Watson finds many children read primarily non-fiction during the school year. But she's happy to see them switch back to fiction during holiday times.

**Old friends**  
As well as the toddlers, old friends come in to chat who have been reading the library's choices for many years.

Mrs. Watson remembers little Meryl Grindell coming to the old library in the town hall and kicking her feet against the railing! Meryl and Charles Kirkness have been regulars over the years. Bessie Musselle is another long-time card holder.

Mrs. Watson has seen changes come with the South-Central Library system and then with Halton Hills and the amalgamating of the library boards of Acton and Georgetown. All of the changes are working well, she says.

She joins Georgetown chief librarian Betsy Cornwell in choosing books even going sometimes to the warehouses to choose them.

She is no longer able to have a knowledge of most of the books on the shelves, but she reads reviews and the book jackets and she can help customers find their favorite kind of reading.

Records, films and projectors have been added to the library's equipment, too. Some people—particularly ill ones—are beginning to get great pleasure from borrowing records as well as books.

Mrs. Watson worked in her husband's business with him and later with son Tom until Watson's restaurant was sold a couple of years ago.

Having the library keeps her from being lonesome, she admits.

Her dog Teachie usually comes with her to the library and keeps track of everyone who comes in the big front doors.

## Veterinary science 4-H club is formed

By Mark J. Leamy  
Asst. Agric. Rep.  
The organization meeting of the Halton 4-H Veterinary Science Club was held on Thursday, Dec. 18. Fourteen members and two leaders were in attendance.

The program for the coming year was discussed. It was decided to again have the club divided into groups. The club completion will be based on a demonstration given by each group at the final meet-

ing. The new executive for this year is as follows, president, Doug McPhail; vice-president, Frank Robinson; secretary, Marilyn McNabb; and news reporter, Bill Robinson. Leaders for this club are Dr. Carl Middlebrook and Cecil Patterson.

The final date for joining this club will be at the first meeting on Jan. 15 at the agricultural office in Milton at 8 p.m.



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CHINESE BIBLE and a Bible used in the courts in Acton years ago were already in the library when Mrs. Watson began working there as a schoolgirl. They are now in the display case. Behind them is a sketch of assistant librarian Madge Chapman.

## NEWS OF THE DISTRICT

### Mini-sewer study

ERIN—Downtown businessmen and Erin Village council are going to combine their financial resources to build a much-needed mini-sewerage system.

### Reduce Hwy. 25 speed

MILTON—Milton council wants to meet with Minister of Transportation and Communication Jim Snow and Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed to see if the speed limits north of Milton on Highway 25 can be reduced. The problem lies between Highway 401 and Five Sideroad on Highway 25. In addition the town wants traffic signals installed at the intersection of Market Drive and Highway 25.

### Winter work for students

BURLINGTON—High school students in need of work during the winter months can find jobs through the city's Department of Recreation Services. Students are needed to work with children at winter activity centres throughout Burlington.

### Housing seminar in Peel

BRAMPTON—Peel Region will host a seminar dealing with housing, servicing, conservation of resources, growth and citizen participation in urban development next month. Representatives from York, Peel and Durham regions will attend the seminar. The seminar is financed by the Ontario Secretariat for Habitat.

### Statistics

During the week of December 8 to December 14, 95 occurrences of a general nature were reported and investigated by Guelph detachment of the O.P.P. Weekly statistics: liquor violations 8, narcotic violations 1, thefts 5, impaired drivers 1.

### Receives promotion

Lorraine (Tyler) Gritman of Scottsdale, Arizona formerly of Acton, has been promoted to Assistant Branch Manager of the Valley National Bank, 40th Street and McDowell Office, Phoenix, Arizona which opened November 19, 1975.

Mrs. Gritman, prior to joining Valley National Bank in 1959, was employed by the Bank of Montreal, Acton, for three years.

Lorraine is the daughter of Mrs. Edna Tyler and the late Matthew A. Tyler.



**LORRAINE (TYLER) GRITMAN** is now assistant branch manager of the Valley National Bank, Phoenix, Arizona.

## Delay giving land to Grand Authority

Eramosa council moved to delay implementing a by-law which would give lands near Highway 24 to the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA).

Council found the new Eramosa-Guelph tollway intersection with the highway unacceptable and joined Guelph in calling for improvements. A by-law, which would stop-up the road and convey 14.19 acres to GRCA, will be held up at least until council has met the ministry of transportation and communications (MTC).

Representatives from

GRCA attended the final meeting of council for the year, Dec. 15. They described a previous meeting with Guelph City officials who called for the new north-south road to be closed until it is signed for 40 mph and other improvements are made.

The major shortcomings Eramosa council found in the crossroads were the lack of turn lanes, signs, and acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Council has already sent its comments on the intersection to MTC, but so far have not received an answer.



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ALSO  
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until Friday, Jan. 2nd - 9 a.m.

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