

Wilmette Public Library

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THE FIRST EFFORTS OF THE COMMUNITY OF WILMETTE to provide reading material for its residents date back to December, 1880, with the formation of a literary society. There were about fifty members each of whom paid an initiation fee of \$1.00.

Under the Illinois law of that time, the school house could be used not only for educational purposes but also as a depository for public libraries and as a meeting place for literary societies open to the public. Under this mandate, lectures were given in the school under the auspices of the society. No admission was charged but a box was passed for contributions to be used for the purchase of books. During the three years of its existence, about 150 books and six periodicals were thus accumulated. The books were kept in the rear of Mr. Kinney's grocery store.

On May 4, 1882, this society was incorporated under the name of "The Wilmette Library Association." This corporation never made a report to the Secretary of State and was certified for cancellation on the first of July, 1902. Eventually this organization passed out of existence and the few books that were left (about 20) were turned over to the Elmwood Library Association.

The second movement for a library came in 1889, when a "Library and

Social Club" was organized by Mrs. M. E. Barker, February 19, 1889. Mrs. Barker was the first president and her Sunday school class formed the nucleus of the club. All the young people of the village were invited to join. Twenty-three members were enrolled at the first meeting. Meetings were held in the homes of the members and the few books which were donated were kept in the Methodist Church. Entertainments were given once a month, the proceeds of which along with the initiation fee went into the library fund for the purchase of books.

In February, 1892, the club voted to incorporate under the name of "The Wilmette Library Association." In March, 1892, however, the committee on incorporation reported that the Secretary of State had refused to grant a charter because there was another corporation of that name in Wilmette.

In April, 1892, the name of the club was changed to "Elmwood Library Association" and a charter obtained from the Secretary of State for incorporation under that name. This charter (now in the files of the public library) gave as the object of the association . . . "to establish and maintain a circulating library for the use of its members and such other