

persons as it may provide by its by-laws." The management of the association was to be vested in a board of seven members elected annually.

At this time, the association voted to rent Arcanum Hall (located on the present site of the Lyman-Rennekar Drugstore, later known as Library Hall, also known as Wilmette Hall) for a period of three years, paying \$6 per month the first year, \$7 per month the second year and \$8 per month the third year. The association was to paper and repaint the interior of the building and the Royal Arcanum was to paint the exterior.

The prospect of a building of their own gave new impetus to the association and the membership increased to one hundred. Mr. W. E. Dibble by his own efforts raised \$53.00 by subscription toward repairs on the hall. To increase the book stock, Mr. Dibble offered to furnish the library with \$200.00 worth of books with the understanding that the association would pay him \$10.00 per month until the books were paid for. The offer was accepted. Entertainments were given and money poured into the treasury. So optimistic was the picture that a piano was bought which cost \$250.00, to be paid for in monthly installments of \$10.00.

In 1894, the picture changed. As so often happens, the work of arranging for the entertainments fell on the shoulders of a few faithful members. The membership dropped and the president had to advance money to pay the rent. To add to the difficulties, during the last winter of their stay in the hall, 1895, a fire broke out

and all of the books were damaged by fire and water.

The Hartford Fire Insurance Company promptly paid \$158.50 to cover the damages, a special meeting was called and all the debts of the association were paid in full. John Panushka offered to provide space for the books in a small room back of his office (located on Central Avenue in front of the present Hoffmann Coal Company) and also to act as librarian for the sum of \$5.00 per month. The offer was accepted but the location proved undesirable and the books did not circulate.

This time the Woman's Club of Wilmette came to the rescue. In 1897, the club rented rooms over a store on Central Avenue (present location of Schultz Dry Cleaners) and offered to give space for the books and the services of different members as librarians. Again the association was revitalized. Books began to circulate again. Entertainments were given and new books were bought with the proceeds. Through the personal efforts of Mrs. C. E. Crocker who went from house to house to solicit new members and to agitate the question of a free public library, many new names were added to the membership roll. It was largely through the efforts of the Woman's Club that the Elmwood Library Association was kept alive.

In 1901, the question of a free public library supported by tax funds was presented to the people of Wilmette and approved. Soon afterwards the Elmwood Library Association voted to loan their books numbering about 1,000 books to the Free