

Public Library with the understanding that the books would be turned over permanently as soon as the new library was firmly established. In the interim, the library was to pay rent on them at the rate of \$1.00 per year.

The newly established public library opened its doors to the public July 6, 1901, in a small room in the rear of the Wilmette Lumber Company on Central Avenue, back of the present Northwestern Railway station, with a collection of 1,347 books. Miss Anna Law, who had been an active and tireless worker in the previous organizations, was appointed librarian.

The library occupied the lumber office for six months and then moved to the second floor of the Jones building, otherwise known as "The Wilmette," which they occupied for three years.

In 1902, rumors of the gifts Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the philanthropist, was making to communities for the erection of public library buildings reached Wilmette. The library board wrote to Mr. Carnegie and received a favorable reply. He was willing to donate the sum of \$10,000 for the erection of a free public library building provided a suitable site, free of all encumbrances, vested in the name of the village of Wilmette or in the public library board as trustees, be furnished; and second, that no less than \$1,000 per annum be guaranteed by the village for the maintenance of the library.

The first condition had already been met by the referendum establishing the library. The question of

a suitable site was not so easily settled.

The location of the proposed building aroused a great deal of interest and some very active opposition. Although the trustees tried to avoid such a division, the geographical location of the library either east or west of the railroad tracks became an issue. Because feeling ran so high on both sides, the trustees finally decided to submit the question to a vote of the people. The question was voted upon July 28, 1903 with the vote 235 for the village hall site; 226 for the Howell site; and 134 for the purchase of a site.

At one time, the possibility of combining the library and the village hall into one unit was considered. A letter was sent to Mr. Carnegie asking if this would be possible. Mr. Carnegie's answer was a flat refusal. Subsequently the village board voted no to the proposition that the village hall site be used for the library building.

With the refusal of the village board to relinquish the village hall site, the library board voted the passage of a resolution for the issuing of bonds for \$4,000 for the purchase of the northeast corner of Wilmette and West Avenues, being lot 1 of Dingee and McDaniel's Re-Subdivision of Lots 5 and 6 of Block 5, Wilmette Village, from the estate of Catherine M. White for \$1,220 and Lot 2 of the same block, 61 feet on Wilmette Avenue from Elizabeth Wolf, for \$1,600, the balance of the \$4,000 to be used for taxes, grading and filling.