

Title: A History of the Beeton Public Library. Page 1/3

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Description: A broad overview of the history of the Beeton Public Library up to and including 1977. Includes information on past buildings which have housed the library. Also contains a lengthy list of people who have played a vital role in the history of the Beeton Library.

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A HISTORY OF THE BEETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

By Mrs. Gordon (Marjorie) Drury

January 1977

The Public Library is a part of the educational system of the Province of Ontario.

We are most fortunate as a village to have a Public Library. There are 978 municipalities in Ontario but Public Libraries are located in less than half of them.

Well over one hundred years ago "The Mechanics Institute" was started in England. On November 22, 1886 a Mechanics Institute was established in Beeton by D.A. Jones. Through his efforts a Provincial association was formed, articles of incorporation were signed, registered books were purchased and Beeton became what was then known as a Free Library under the "Libraries Act" which was passed in 1882 and was probably the most important event in the History of Libraries in Ontario. The first circulation took place in May 1887 so we have the forerunner of the Beeton Public Library which thus became, later, part of the well organized Library System of the year 1911.

The first headquarters was in the Post Office building which was situated on Main Street now occupied by the Royal Bank of Canada. This building was built in approximately 1898. The story goes that when the property was staked out for construction of other buildings D.A. Jones moved the stakes on to his property unknown to the builder. Thus the walls were built leaving Mr. Jones the two end walls to finish.

In 1940 fire destroyed most of the books in the Library although the rooms were only slightly damaged. The Library Board started over again, purchased books and carried on in a room in the Gableton block on the south side of the Main Street until it moved to the Council Chambers in 1950 where it remained until 1962. During 1962 the Board purchased the present building from the Bell Telephone Company for \$2900.00. The building was remodelled and repaired by Gordon Bray. Frank Prothero installed a new furnace and the Stewart Brothers (Earl and Norval) did the wiring.

The Library comprised at first two rooms. In Beeton Centennial Year 1974 another room was added and is called the "Centennial Room" which was one of the original sites where electricity was generated in Beeton. This room is a reading and reference room. Several other additions have been made to the library equipment to remodel and up-date the building. These include new shelving, trolleys, tables, chairs and desks. Well stocked with books the library is a pleasant place to visit.

The Library is taking its cultural place in our community and with a growing membership, the membership now is about 600, will play even a larger part. The Library Board appreciated the interest and financial help of the Beeton Women's Institute.

In 1975 Beeton honoured two of its longtime Library Board Members when Mrs. Fred. Spearing and Mrs. W.E. Kearns received plaques presented by former reeve Mr. J.K. McKelvey. It is thought that Mrs. Kearns was first appointed to the board in 1924. Mrs. Spearing served continuously on the board from 1938 to 1974.

Membership -- approximately 600 taking in Tecumseth and Adjala townships.

County of Simcoe Library bookmobile calls four times a year leaving five or six hundred books including large print books on loan. Any books not available here may be requested from the County of Simcoe Library through the inter-library loan system.

Our Public Library is a member of the Georgian Bay Regional Library system which will supply films and talking books on request.

Although D.A. Jones was post master for a number of years he also enjoyed hunting. Some will remember seeing the elk, deer and moose horns hanging in the Library room behind the post office.

In reference to a Library Records Book a meeting of the New Board appointed by the town council and school trustees to undertake the management of the Public Library was held in the reading room at 8p.m. March 10, 1910.

The members of the Board are Rev. J.J. Sperling, John Lannin (who built the house where John Hoover lives on Main St.), W.H. Davis (printer), Angus Smith, J.J. Bell (hardware store), Herb J. Law (Reeve), and M.L. (Louis) Aitken (Secretary-treasurer).

The following names listed in the Minutes Books down through the years have played an important part in the work of the Library; Rev. Mr. Fox (United Church Minister), Rev. Mr. Lambert (U.C. Minister), Mrs. D.A. Jones, Mr. Thomas Hammell (re-Insurance and Earl's grandfather), Mrs. M.L. Aitken, Mrs. W.H. Hammell, Andrew G. Gaul (Jeweller), Miss Renie Wright, Mrs. D.A. Jones (2nd. wife) Librarian, Mr. W.T. Stewart, (Mrs. Harry Camplins father who had the corner store at Main and Centre Streets), Rev. Battersby (Anglican Minister), Henry M. Aitken, E.G. Miller (school teacher), Mr. A.B. Howes, Harold Strangways, Rev. Allan P. Kennedy (Anglican Minister), Dr. Fred. Spearing, Rev. Bedford (U.C. Minister), George E. Reynolds (Mrs. Jack Camplins father who had the corner store at north Main and Centre streets.), Mrs. Sam. Rainey, Miss Marion Pierson, Librarian and a sister to Mrs. Ira Palmer), Dr. Keith F. Rogers, Rev. Lovering (United Church Minister who married Jack and Mary Camplin), Mrs. S. Ray, John Carleton, (reeve), Fred. C. Pierson, post master and Librarian for 21 years, Mrs. H.E. Kearns, Mrs. Wesley Bell, Rev. Adams (U.C. Min.), Harry E. Camplin, Rev. A. Clarke (Ang. Min.), Mrs. Elwood Corbett, Rev. H.D. Cleverdon (Anglican Minister who married the writer of this story), Mrs. Fred. Spearing, Mrs. A.G. Green (sister of George Ferguson), Howard Galbraith, Rev. H.G. Blake (Ang. Min.), Mrs. W.A. Colwell (Librarian), W. Elwyn King (re-Insurance), Mrs. S.H. McKelvey, Rev. H.E. Webb (Ang. Min.), Mrs. W.W. Cole (Librarian for 13 years), Cecil A. Brittain, James Thompson (Reeve), Mrs. Enid Levin, (Hotel), Mrs. Eleanor McCague, Roy Coleman (Reeve), Thomas Little (Reeve), Mrs. Kay Parsons, Frank Rossiter, Mrs. Ellis Taylor (hardware store), Mrs. Charles Porter (Lived where Della Voisin lives), Earl Hammell (Re Insurance), Mary McCague (Assistant Librarian), Wesley Tuer (bank manager), Rev. Robert Matthews (Ang. Min.), Ernest Letts (Reeve), R. Brucker, Mrs. Harold Pettigrew, Earl Brown (Reeve), Mrs. Sidney Kearns, Dorothy Coleman (Assistant Librarian), Joyce Derrick (Assistant Librarian), Jos. A. Wright (Janitor), Billie Watson Jr. (Assistant Librarian), Mrs. Fred. St. Peters (Librarian since April 1, 1968), Ed. Boynton (Reeve), Lawrence Newton (Reeve), Mrs. John Hoover, Mrs. Max. Wilson, Connie Strachan (Assistant Librarian), Ed. McDermott, Mrs. Gordon Armstrong, Sheridan McGinty (Reeve), and Mrs. Allan Bennett.

In 1976 the Library Board had a drop-box made and put in the Variety Fair corner store.

The Board Members for 1977 are Sheridan McGinty, Ed. McDermott, Mrs. Gordon Armstrong (sec-treasurer), Mrs. Allan Bennett, Mrs. John Hoover and Mrs. Fred. St. Peters (Librarian).

Visit the Library

Hours Open Tuesday night 7:00-9:00
 Thursday night 7:00-9:00
 Saturday afternoon 1:30- 4:30

Books

Books are keys to wisdom's treasure
Books are gates to lands of pleasure
Books are paths that upward lead
Books are friends. Come let us read.

Author Unknown.