

Chapter 1

Libraries

in towns which had

less than

one thousand people

when the library was founded

# Table 1

Town	Population at founding	County seat	County	Location on map	City	Township	Founded by tax	Founded by gift	Date of founding	Volumes	Circulation 1897-98	Remarks
Cambridge	in 1880 1203	Yes	Henry	D-3		Yes		Yes	1878	4900	about 7500	Has been subscription, village, later.
Gordova	in 1880 447	No	Rock Island	D-2	Yes			Yes	1878	1522	1652	Began as reading room.
Earlville	in 1880 963	No	LaSalle	F-2	Yes		Yes		1873	2632	5304	Library received school library
Elkhart	in 1890 414	No	Logan	F-5	Yes			Yes	1894	549	1472	
Lombard	in 1880, 378	No	DuPage	H-2	Yes			Yes	1882	2254	2367	Property of church.
Oregon	in 1880 1088	Yes	Ogle	F-1	Yes		Yes		1873	2100	No report	
Rockton	in 1890, 892	No	Winnebago	F-1		Yes		Yes	1888	3300	7500	in 1896
Toulon	in 1890 945	Yes	Stark	E-3	Yes		Yes		1893	1400	No report	
Winnetka	in 1880 584	No	Cook	I-1	Yes		Yes		1882	2700	6000	A village library, not township

Cambridge

Public Library

At Cambridge, county seat of Henry county, the library established in 1876 has been by turns subscription, village, and township, which is its present condition.

The library has received no large gifts, and its income has always been small.

The early records have disappeared. The library has 4900 volumes, and the circulation 1897-98 was 100 to 200 a week, or about 7500 volumes for the year. The library is open one day in each week; the librarian's salary is \$52 a year, and there is one assistant at \$18.20 a year.

The income from the tax is from \$500 to \$600 annually.

The town has a flour-mill, six churches, and two newspapers.

Cordova

Public Library

The library of Cordova, Rock Island county, was started in 1878 as a reading room, by George Marshall, George W. Dean, Rev. E.M. Elton, and Dr. J. Hoke.

The library is supported by tax , has received no gifts , or endowment, except some small sums of money.

There are 1522 volumes ,with a circulation of 1652 volumes .

The income from the tax is \$225 a year; the librarian receives \$150 .

There are three churches , and a lime-kiln.

Earlville

Public Library

The library of Earlville , La Salle county, came into being in May , 1874; the report received is as follows:

" A petition was presented to the village Board in 1873, praying them to call an election to vote on a proposition to levy a one mill tax for library purposes. The first Library Board was elected the next spring.

The village became a city in 1876 or 1877, since which time the Board has been appointed by the Mayor.

When the public library was established, there was presented to it about two or three hundred books belonging to the Earlville Public School; these had been raised by contributions, donations, and the proceeds from school entertainments.

We have now about 2700 volumes in the library, and it is visited by 75 to 100 persons each Saturday; the result is that a great many young people under 17 have a better idea of popular authors and are able to criticize books better than many old heads.

The library is very popular and would not be dispensed with. We have a room in the City Hall on purpose for it , and we are proud of the fact and think it a great benefit."

The circulation in 1897 was 5304, an excellent record, if , as it appears from the letter , the library is open only on Saturday. An occasional lecture, notices of new books , and other items in local papers comprise the advertising.

## Earlville - - 2

The population of the town was estimated at 1000 when the library became public. The total income of the library at present is about \$200 a year. Ploughs and carriages are manufactured in the town.

There have been no gifts of any size since the books from the School Library were received.

## Elkhart

### Public Library

The people of Elkhart, Logan county, owe their library to Mrs. L. P. Gillett, who promised to give it if saloons were banished from the town for three consecutive years.

If, two years after Mrs. Gillett's death, the town has not accepted the library and provided for its support, it is to revert to her heirs.

The gift was made in 1894; the trustees have not put the matter before the Council, as the village is not ready for the question.

The library is supported by "entertainments, amateur theatricals, cantatas, musicales, and readings. All have been successful."

The semi-annual interest of \$1000 in bank, is used to buy books. The town is learning to appreciate the library and will no doubt, be ready to take charge when the trustees consider that a suitable time has come.

There are about 550 volumes, with a circulation of nearly 1500 volumes yearly.

The town has one factory; the community is fairly wealthy.

17

Lombard

Free Library

The village of Lombard, Du Page county , of less than 600 people is about twenty miles south-west of Chicago. The library has flourished in its present form for more than sixteen years.

In form and organization it differs from any other which I have found, being free to all yet the exclusive property of a church. They seem to have solved a difficult problem successfully . It is explained by the following letter from the Secretary, Mr. J. T. Read:

" I am delighted to give a little information for your thesis, especially as our work here is slightly unique; at least it is called so.

The peculiarity of our library is its ownership by the Society of the First Church of Lombard, with absolute freedom of use by all the people of the town and vicinity. I have been the 'head-centre' of the thing , though never nominally librarian.

Up to 1882 it had been only a Sunday-school library, though more valuable and life-y than most of its class, of , say 500 books. In that year we determined to widen it out, both in its book character , and its use. We invited contributions of books and raised some money. Then we sent out a little circular inviting everybody and his aunt and grandmother to make use of our 700 books, with neither fee nor fines.



Lombard - - 2

Our church building is at a street corner, and the library is easy of access by a side door. This is a great help.

We avoid sectarian jealousy by not being sectarians. Our church was, until within a few years, the only church, and is now the only one in which the English language is used. It is Congregational in form and connections; but its membership includes a wide range of origins. No member except the clerk can tell all these origins. So, as we are not sected among ourselves we do not cut up other people, and are slashed by them no more than we deserve. The other church, a thriving one, is Lutheran, of the old type, with service in German.

As to the character of the community, there are about 1000 people in the town and tributary thereto, one half, or more of German blood; the surrounding farmers are almost all Germans. The valuation in the corporation for taxing purposes is somewhat less than \$80000. There are no very rich people. Most of the American men, and now many Germans, go to Chicago for their daily work. A brick-and-tile factory is the only local factory of moment.

We have never tried to obtain corporate support. The allowable tax in the village corporation would yield less than \$160 a year. We could not work a township tax, if there could be one, because we are near a corner of the township, and a larger village is inside it, four miles away. With public ownership a salary must be paid and the income would give but a scrap over, for books.

Lombard - - 3

The Sunday -school gives us twelve of its weekly collections. These amount to about \$25 for the twelve. We catch a show of some reputable kind occasionally and make it divide with us, we giving the church building as a hall. Some winters we have carried a course of entertainments, and made some money. Sometimes a subscription raised for some other purpose has over money that is given to us ;we try to have our porringer right side up when it thus rains porridge. When we have a special need that will be appreciated by unappreciative people, some good man or woman passes a subscription paper.

There are now somewhat over 2200 volumes in the library. About 200 persons use it during a year. The book deliveries run from 2400 to 3000 a year.

We have begun to classify by the decimal system with Cutter book numbers , and have about 800 of the books thus ready. For these we have a card shelf-list.

About three-fifths of the deliveries are on Sunday, mostly in connection with Sunday-school, and two-fifths on Wednesday. Perhaps one-fifth go to people who touch our church in no other way. We might increase this by missionary work, as probably some suppose we are trying to put our style of religion upon them. But our library is as nearly worldly as any publicly-owned one. It is a little more didactic , less for mere fun.

The recent purchases are in the line of the " A. L. A. "

Lombard - - 4

catalogue of 1893 , being a trifle cleaner than that and avoiding its heaviest books. The old Sunday-school stock has been weeded, but not so thoroughly as might be. Some of our managers liked to keep books to count.

We are keeping up files of Harper, Century, Scribner, and St. Nicholas magazines. These are found very handy by people who write for clubs either here or in the city.

We have no reading room; we have not been equal to the expense of it, as it should be a little nearer the center of things than the church building is. It ought to be within the triangle angled by the railway station, post-office, and dram-shop."

The rules of the library are three:

One book at a time.

Use the book carefully.

Return the book in two weeks, or have it renewed.

They report as follows:

" Very simple rules; but they work well. Of the last 15000 deliveries only two books have failed to come back, and, as we know from whom those are due, we still look for their return. The library is open Sunday from noon to 2P.M. and Wednesday from 6 to 8 P. M. "

The circulation of 2400 to 3000 volumes does well ,taking into account the conditions. Similar plans might be useful in other villages.

## Oregon

### Public Library

The library in Oregon, county seat of Ogle county, was founded by the City Council "to furnish free reading to the citizens of Oregon." The action was taken in 1873, under the State law.

It has always been public; it has had no endowment fund or other gifts. The magazines and a number of illustrated papers are taken by the library, while the city papers are donated.

The library contains 2100 volumes; I have been unable to learn what the circulation is.

The town is on Rock river; there is a flour mill and ploughs and wagons are manufactured.

The income of the library is about \$200 a year.

Rockton

Talcott Free Library

The library in Rockton, Winnebago county, was founded in 1888, " to benefit the citizens."

Mr. Wait Talcott offered to, give the building and the house and lot adjoining , and his son W. A. Talcott offered to fit the building for use if the people would agree to support the library.

The people of the township , at a called meeting, agreed to support it. There have been no other gifts. The tax raised is about \$700 a year.

There are now 3300 volumes, with a circulation in 1896 of 7500 volumes.

The town has paper and flour mills, and a foundry.

Toulon

Public Library

The library of Toulon, county seat of Stark county, was founded in 1893, presumably by tax voted by the people, as it is supported by the tax.

No report could be obtained as to the circulation, but there are 1400 volumes in the library.

The library has received no gifts , and has no endowment fund.

The tax amounts to \$350 a year; the librarian's salary is \$60.

There are in the town five churches, a cheese-factory, and a woolen-mill.

Winnetka

Public Library

Winnetka, Cook county, has a public library ,  
founded in 1882, under the section of the State law for villages.

It has had no gifts.

There are now 2700 volumes in the library, with a circulation  
of 125 volumes a week, equal to more than 6000 a year.

The income of the library from the tax is \$800 per annum.

The town appears to have no special industry, being rather a  
residence suburb for Chicago.

## Summary

Public libraries in villages of less than 1000 inhabitants are not numerous, unless aided by gifts, for the tax is too small to be of much use.

Nine libraries founded in such towns are considered; three of these towns are county seats, Cambridge, Oregon, and Toulon; the library of Cambridge, founded in 1878, and that of ~~Toulon~~<sup>Rockton</sup>, ten years younger are the only ones organized under the township law. That of Winnetka is under village organization; the library of Lombard is practically free to any one in the vicinity, though it is the property of the congregation of the First Church of the village.

Four, Earlville, Oregon, Toulon, and Winnetka, owe their libraries to the tax; Earlville was given a school library, but the others have had no aid.

Taking up the other five, Cambridge had a subscription library which became the property of the village, then of the township; the library of Cordova was a reading room, opened by individuals and transferred to the public; in Lombard the library belongs to the church, and is supported wholly by gifts; Elkhart and Rockton received their libraries as gifts from individuals.

Ranked by the rate of circulation the libraries reporting are Elkhart, Rockton, Winnetka, Earlville, Cambridge, Cordova, Lombard; the library of Oregon, founded 1873, and that in Toulon, 1893, do not report circulation. Novelty may account for Elkhart's rate and the fact that Rockton library is open to the township would increase its use. Otherwise there is no noticeable difference.