

Chapter 3

Libraries

in towns which had

from twenty five hundred

to

four thousand people

when the library was founded

Table 3

Town	Population at founding	County seat	County	Location on map	City	Town ship	Founded by tax	Founded by gift	Date of founding	Volumes now	Circulation 1897-98	Remarks
Batavia	in 1880, 3500	No	Kane	H-2		Yes	Yes		1882	5500	22000	Supported by gifts-1882
Belvidere	in 1880, 3231	Yes	Boone	G-1	Yes		Yes		1885	9362	29000	Memorial gift of \$5000
Centralia	in 1870, 3190	No	Marion	F-8	Yes		Yes		1873	3500	No statistics	Success doubtful.
Geneseo	in 1880, 3522	No	Henry	D-3		Yes	Yes		1882-6	6500	No record is kept	From Shareholders
Havana	in 1890, 2525	Yes	Mason	D-5	Yes		Yes		1898	1100	estimate for 1897-9 estimate 10000	Gift, \$1400
Macomb	in 1880, 3140	Yes	McDonough	G-5	Yes		Yes		1882	7505	27908	Library open 2 days a week.
Mendota	in 1890, 3542	No	LaSalle	F-3	Yes			Yes	1894	4959	17594	Belonged to Stockholders 1870-94
Olney	in 1890, 3831	Yes	Richland	H-8	Yes			Yes	1896	3600	13351	Stockholders' 1886-96. Has also 3000v. Govt. documents.
Pontiac	in 1890, 2784	Yes	Livingston	G-4	Yes		Yes		1893	2708	17234	
Princeton	in 1890, 339	Yes	Bureau	F-3	Yes			Yes	1885	7000	21000	Statistics of 1896
Savanna	in 1890, 3097	No	Carroll	D-1	Yes		Yes		1896	1371	11897	300 volumes given to it.
Sycamore	in 1890, 2987	Yes	DeKalb	G-2	Yes			Yes	1893	2700	12061	Founded by club.

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Town	Population at founding	County seat	County	Location on map	City	Township	Founded by tax	Founded by gift	Date of founding	Volumes now	Circulation 1897-98	Remarks
Tuscola	estimate in 1895, 3000	Yes	Douglas	H-6	Yes			Yes	1898	1400	estimate, from first month 6300-7000	Subscription of \$1200
Warsaw	in 1870, 3583	No	Hancock	B	Yes		Yes		1872	4984	10835	Bequest, \$5000 to buy books

Batavia

Public Library

The public library of Batavia, Kane county, was founded " to satisfy public demand ", by Hon. John Van Nortwick, Jas. O. McClellan, Rev. A. Jutkins, F. H. Buck , and others; it was supported by gifts till 1882, when it was turned over to the township under the State law, receiving first a one mill and now a two mill tax."

It has received occasional gifts, none very large. The library has been advertised by "newspaper notices, lists of new books, and reading room advertisements."

The circulation in 1896 was 1840 volumes monthly, or 22000 volumes for the year. There were 5500 volumes in the library.

The township has a population of about 5000. The town has a foundry, a paper-mill, and other industries. There are three clubs, a study club, a history club, and a Shakspeare club.

Belvidere

Ida Public Library

At Belvidere, county seat of Boone county, the library was founded in 1885, "by the City Council under the State law for public libraries, and named the Ida Public Library in consideration of a donation of \$5000 given by Allen C. Fuller as a memorial for his deceased daughter of that name. The donation was entirely expended for books."

The library is in the City Hall and has received no other gifts. No special advertising has been done.

There are now over 9000 volumes and the circulation last year was 29000 volumes in a town of from 4000 to 5000 people.

The city appropriates \$700 a year for the library. There are in the town flour mills, cheese factories, and boot and shoe factories.

Centralia

Public Library

The library of Centralia, Marion county, was founded in 1873, presumably by the city as it is supported solely by taxation.

It has received no bequests or notable gifts.

In 1899 , the library contained 5000 volumes; no statistics of circulation can be obtained; none are given in the 1896 report

The income of the library for 1898 was \$900.

Centralia is the center of trade for the fruit-belt, has the Illinois Central machine-shops, and is interested in various manufactories.

Geneseo

Public Library

The Public Library of Geneseo, Henry county, has had a varied existence. Begun in 1881 as a shareholders' library, the shareholders headed a petition asking the city to take charge; they did this from " a desire to extend the influence of the library and on account of a growing desire for knowledge on the part of the public."

Later, the Library Board caused it to be transferred to the care of the township in order to increase its revenue and usefulness. No more definite statement has seemed obtainable.

No record of the circulation is kept, but the city limits include most of the people of the township; the library is said to be popular. In the Spring of 1898 the library received a gift of \$10000 for a new building. The tax amounts to about \$1500 yearly.

The town is "mercantile, supported by a large farming population."

Havana

Public Library

The library at Havana, county seat of Mason county, is one of the youngest in the State, having been opened in June , 1898. The fact that a thriving Chautauqua Association holds its meetings here probably aroused a desire for a library.

The library was founded " to meet the wants of the public, help in the public school work, etc."

A thorough canvass of the town brought \$1400 in money and 250 volumes ; this , with the tax for two years, amounting to \$1200, made a good basis; the library was accordingly established by the city, under the State law.

The library has been advertised by socials and lectures, through the schools and newspapers. The librarian says: " There has been a constant increase of interest on the part of the public." There are now 1100 volumes and the circulation, at 200 volumes a week , the present rate, promises to be more than 10000 volumes a year.

With a sure income of \$600 a year from the tax, this library seems to have a bright prospect for the future.

The town, of about 3000 people, is on the Illinois river; it is a shipping point for corn, and Osage orange hedge plants . Farming tools are made here.

Macomb

Free Public Library

At Macomb, county seat of McDonough county, the library, founded in 1882, " for the good of the public", has prospered steadily. I quote from the librarian's letter as follows:

"Our library was organized shortly after the law was passed authorizing a two mill tax levy for library purposes. A paper was quietly circulated among the taxpayers for permission to tax them , but it has never been done directly. The City Council instead makes an appropriation yearly for its support.

The first year they gave \$1000, the next , only \$300 , because our claims were not presented by the Board. The Council thought \$100 would be enough , but they would be generous. For several years we have had \$800 which is more, it is said , than we would have if a tax were levied .

Our library is open only two days a week. The money has nearly all been spent for books. We have a most excellent library, and a fine circulation."

There are 7500 volumes with a circulation of 27908 volumes. The library is open two days each week and the librarian receives two dollars a day. The expenses are small. The library has had no gifts.

The town has a small college; carriages and earthenware are manufactured. The population is now about 5000.

Mendota

Graves Public Library

The library of Mendota, La Salle county, was founded in 1870 by an association of stockholders: as an association library in 1874 it received the gifts to which it owes its name. Mr. and Mrs. Willard Graves gave it \$2000 in money, an interest-bearing mortgage, a building, and half a block of land. Entertainments were given and the proceeds went to the library.

It became public in 1894 and has since been supported by the tax, under the State law, about \$675 a year.

The library contains almost 5000 volumes, and had a circulation last year of 17594 volumes.

The town has a Lutheran seminary, and two iron-foundries; it derives most of its support from the prosperous farming community of which it is the center.

Olney

Public Library

At Olney, county seat of Richland county, the library, founded originally in 1886, became public in 1896, "in response to a demand greater than could be met by the existing stock library".

How the change was made is told by the librarian:

"Our library was at first a stock library, supported by dues paid. But it was soon found that this did not meet the demand; the stockholders conferred with the City Council proposing to turn the library over as a free circulating library, if the Council would appropriate sufficient funds to care for it; a tax was made and the library has been a success, and our people could not do without it.

The demand is greater now than our means can meet but we are hoping for better things. We rent comfortable and nicely located rooms. Our library is one of the Government depositories. On our reading room table are many of the best magazines and papers which are constantly read; our reference books are used a great deal. The result of the change is satisfactory, so far as our means can make it so."

A few books have been given to the library, in addition to the 3000 volumes of Government documents. The circulation for 3000 volumes was over 13000 volumes.

The town has flour mills, a brass foundry, and a woolen mill.

Pontiac

Public Library

Pontiac, county seat of Livingston county, has one of the comparatively recent and very successful libraries of the State. The library was founded in 1893 by ordinance of the City Council, as a city library; Dr. J. J. Stites appears to have been one of those who urged the step upon the Council.

Their largest gift has been that of Judge Babcock, consisting of two blocks of land in the city; these were sold for \$2200, and \$800 paid for a suitable lot ; the rest of the sum was put into the building; I have been unable to learn the total cost of the building.

There is no endowment, and no other important gifts have been mentioned.

The library contained last year 2708 volumes , while the circulation was 17234 volumes.

The income from the tax for that time was \$750, but the tax for 1898-99 is expected to be \$1150. This promises well for the future usefulness of the library.

There are in the town shoe- and paper-factories, mills, and foundries; the Illinois State Reformatory is located here also.

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Princeton

Matson Public Library

The library of Princeton, county seat of Bureau county, was founded in 1885, probably as a gift; it has an endowment of \$14964, yielding an income yearly of \$1726.

E. C. Bates left by will \$20000 for a library building. I do not know what has been actually done about the building.

In 1896 there were 7000 volumes, with a circulation of 21000 volumes.

The town has coal-mines, and two flour-mills. Agricultural implements are manufactured.

Savanna

Public Library

The library of Savanna, Carroll county, was founded in 1896, by the City Council under the State law.

There were 1371 volumes in 1898; 11897 volumes were circulated in 1897-98.

About 300 volumes have been given to the library at various times . These have been the only gifts.

The tax for the library is \$800 a year.

There are in the town several factories; it is also a place of some importance as a shipping point on the Mississippi river.

Sycamore

Public Library

The library of Sycamore, county seat of De Kalb county, owes its existence to the "Athena Circle", of the town. The following letter from a member of the Circle tells the story fully, as follows:

"In the first place, we worked, by means of lecture courses, suppers, etc., until we raised, I think, \$700 and had it in the Bank, with the avowed purpose of founding a public library for our city.

In the second place, we secured the names of all, or nearly all, of the large taxpayers of our city, petitioning the City Council to make an appropriation of \$1000 to buy books for the library, promising to equip rooms for library and reading room and pay all expenses for one year in order that the first appropriation should be used for buying books only.

The library was not opened until August, 1893; during the time from 1891-93 we were working to raise the money to equip our rooms. The city has made an appropriation every year since, sometimes more, sometimes less, but we have had \$500 for the last three years. We are organized under our State law for cities under 10000 inhabitants.

Our library has been a great success and we are looking for larger rooms. The young people patronize the reading room, which contains all the monthly magazines, illustrated papers,

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and daily papers, and seem to enjoy the privilege of so doing."

The library has 2700 volumes ,and the circulation last year was 12061 volumes.

The town has several factories, of cheese, tile,ploughs, and watermotors , and also two creameries. Waterman Hall , a school for girls, is near.

The library appears to be doing very well on small funds.

Tuscola

Public Library

At Tuscola , county seat of Douglas county , the Women's Club found that a library seemed to be needed.

" The impetus which culminated in the public library was started at the meeting of the Federation of Women's Clubs, at Jacksonville, 1897. The ladies worked with great enthusiasm and finally succeeded in obtaining a two mill tax , which will give about \$500 yearly for the library."

They raised \$400 in the Club and secured subscriptions for a considerable sum, \$1200. This was used to buy books , and pay current expenses till May, 1899, when the tax is due."

They have had one gift of \$100; a merchant gave a per cent of his sales for a week; an entertainment was held and the remainder of the sum noted above was raised by donations.

The town is the center of a rich farming district; it is said to be the largest broom-corn shipping point in the United States.

Warsaw

Free Public Library and Reading room

At Warsaw, Hancock county, the library was established in 1872, " to satisfy a public demand , " by the city.

The library has received a bequest from Mr. William A. Hill , \$5000 to purchase books; the interest is used for the purpose.

With 4984 volumes the circulation for 1898 was 10835 volumes.

The total income of the library for the same time was \$690.

The town, on the Mississippi river, ships hay , and general produce; there are flour and woolen mills, and pickle-works. Agricultural implements are manufactured.

The population decreased steadily from 1870 to 1890, according to the U. S. Census; being in 1870, 3583, in 1880, 3105, and in 1890, 2721; the estimate for 1895 gives it 3000.

Summary

The towns considered in Chapter 3 are 14 in number; eight of the towns are county seats; the libraries are all city libraries in these, probably because the size of the county seat usually makes it possible to have a library by the city funds alone without other aid.

Of the four established by tax, Belvidere and Havana had gifts of money in the beginning, Macomb and Pontiac appear to have depended solely on the tax.

Two of the four in county seats which were founded by gifts, Sycamore and Tuscola, owe their libraries to clubs, Olney had had a stockholders' library which was given to the city, but the library of Princeton is the gift of an individual.

Turning to the six libraries in towns not county seats, those of Batavia and Geneseo are township libraries; that at Batavia had been supported by gifts till it became public in 1882. The libraries at Centralia, Savanna, and Warsaw were founded by tax; Savanna received a gift of 300 volumes, and Warsaw has a bequest of \$5000 for the purchase of books. The library at Mendota was given by the stockholders.

According to the manner of founding, seven were founded by gift and seven by tax. Four of the gift libraries came from stockholders, those in Sycamore and Tuscola are due to clubs, while Princeton has the only individual gift. Belvidere, Havana, Savanna, and Warsaw had gifts to supplement the tax.

Measured by circulation, Havana leads, followed by Savanna, Pontiac, Tuscola, Sycamore, Batavia, Macomb, Olney, Mendota,

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Belvidere, Princeton , and Warsaw , in the order named. No report of circulation can be obtained for Centralia and Geneseo.

Havana and Savanna circulate more than nine times the number of volumes in their libraries; Pontiac , seven times, Tuscola five times, ; Warsaw has the lowest recorded circulation , only twice the number of volumes in the library.

The oldest of the five libraries which rank high is only six years old,; the library of Warsaw has existed since 1872.

The manner of founding seems to have no effect on the prosperity and use of the library; but the library must have new books , and an income to keep the library up in popular ones in order to succéed.