

Guide to the Chippewa Falls Public Library Records, 1896-1965

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Summary Information

Title: Chippewa Falls Public Library Records

Inclusive Dates: 1896-1965

Creator: Chippewa Falls Public Library (Wis.)

Call Number: Chippewa Series 43 Quantity: 0.8 c.f. (2 archives boxes)

Repository: Housed at the Area Research Center, William D. McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society, Library-Archives Division

Archival Locations: UW-Eau Claire McIntyre Library / Eau Claire Area Research Ctr.

Abstract: Records of the Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, public library established in 1894, including annual reports of the board of directors (1896-1904), narrative annual reports of the librarian to the board (1897-1956), and statistical reports to the Wisconsin Free Library Commission; and minutes of the board of directors (1950-1955). Daily circulation records (mainly 1914-1951) detail adult and juvenile circulation patterns by broad subject categories. Also included are papers about the Roujet D. Marshall bequest, miscellaneous financial records of the library and of the Dancing Club that met in the library building, and a record of the titles that comprised the renting collection, 1920- 1922.

Language: English

Biography/History

The Chippewa Falls Public Library opened on February 5, 1894 in response to a highly popular "book social" sponsored by the People's Literary Society. The new library was located in the McBean Building at 19 East Central Street. In December, 1903 a new library building was erected with a 20,000 dollar gift from the Carnegie Foundation. In 1914 a fire in one of the offices of the new building destroyed numerous books and most of the library's earliest records. Due to steady growth both within the community and in the size of the library's collection, a larger library was built and opened in 1969. This structure, located at 105 W. Central Street, continues to serve as Chippewa Falls' only public library.

For the period represented by the records, 1896-1965, the City Council was the ultimate authority to which the library reported, and city appropriations accounted for the largest share of the library's funding. A board of directors oversaw the functions of the library which was managed by a head librarian and staff. The head librarian was responsible for all aspects of administration and operation including the compilation of yearly reports and budgets. The reports contained much essential information that attested to the responsible operation and maintenance of the library--such as

circulation totals and statistics, total receipts and expenditures, the allocation of funds, and a written summary of how the librarian perceived the position of the institution in the community.

A number of individuals are entwined with the history of the library during this period, foremost among them being the earliest librarians, Mary Stanley (served 1894-1895), Maude Earley (served 1895-1901), Belle Walrath (served 1901-1907), Anna Bronsky (served 1907-1912), and Marion E. Bryant (served 1912-1942). Also of significance in the library's history is Justice Roujet D. Marshall because of the sizeable contribution he bequeathed to the library in 1926.

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of the records of the Chippewa Falls Public Library is board of directors' reports to the city council (1896-1904), librarian's annual reports to the board (1897-1956), and selected circulation records (1896-1951, primarily after 1914). Smaller files consist of information about the Marshall Fund, minutes of the board of directors (1950-1955 only), and a folder of general records.

The librarians annual reports (1897-1956), including in most cases a separate statistical statement, make up the core information in the series and they represent the most complete documentation in the series both in terms of years covered and amount and consistency of the information represented. The reports include a narrative summary of the accomplishments of the previous year and issues for the coming year. Each year also includes a copy of the statistical survey and financial summary reported to the Wisconsin Free Library Commission. This portion of the report varies slightly over the course of the series, but it generally contains circulation and financial information as well as information about the staff. The circulation books on forms also supplied by the Free Library Commission consist of detailed daily statistics by general classification category on the types of books circulated for both children and adults.

The remaining record books consist of early financial and overdue fines records, information about the Marshall bequest fund, a record of titles that comprised the Renting Collection, 1920-1922, and a record book of the Dancing Club that met in the Library in 1896.

Administrative/Restriction Information Acquisition Information

Accession Number: C2000/128

Processing Information

Processed by Daniel Bull (2001 intern), Susan E. Davis, and Carolyn J. Mattern.

Search Terms/Subject Terms: Public libraries—Wisconsin—Chippewa Falls

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Box/Folder 1/2	Board of Directors Minutes, 1950-1955
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	Circulation Reports
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Box/Folder 2/4	Financial Record Book, 1893-1914
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