Marking Fifty Years of Library Service

The Orlando Public Library
November 1923 — November 1973
Orlando, Florida

For Fifty Years . . .
A Center of Information
A Source of Community Pride
Early History . . .

Orlando's First Library

For many years before the public library came into existence, the Sorosis Club of Orlando had maintained a circulating library for its members. This collection was first housed on the second floor of the Old Armory Building on Court Street, and was later moved to the Knox Building on the corner of Pine and Court Streets. Later, demand for library facilities in the city became so great that the privilege of using this collection was extended to non-members for a reasonable fee. After many years, the City recognized the public service rendered by Sorosis and granted a small subsidy to assist in maintaining the library.

The Beginning of the Public Library

Sorosis and the Orlando Board of Education led a movement to establish a tax-supported free public library in the City.

In 1919, Mr. E. G. Duckworth, Mayor of Orlando, was instrumental in securing the centrally located lot at the corner of Central and Rosalind for the Library site.

On May 11, 1920, the citizens showed by a vote of 417 to 19 that they wanted a library and were willing to pay for it, and a one mill tax was levied for library purposes on property in Orlando.

The Albertson Gift

Captain Charles L. Albertson, a retired Police Inspector of New York City and a winter resident of Orlando, had for many years been collecting books and had a fine collection at his home in Waverly, New York. He had offered this collection to the City of Waverly, which was unable to accept his books as a gift and properly house them. In November, 1920, Captain Albertson offered his collection to the City of Orlando, on the condition that it would furnish a suitable building to house it.

The contract between the City of Orlando and Captain Albertson provided that Orlando would accept the gift of the Albertson collection and furnish the library building; that the library should be known as the Albertson Public Library; that Captain Albertson should be Advisory Superintendent of the Library through his lifetime; and that Orlando should suitably maintain the Library, particularly that part of it known as the Loose-Leaf Encyclopedia (now called the picture and pamphlet files).
The Original Building

On February 21, 1922, the City held a bond election, and the vote was 446 for and 155 against a bond issue for certain municipal improvements, including a public library building. Mr. Murray S. King was instructed to prepare plans for the building, which were approved by the Commission on May 12, 1922. The contract was let to Mr. C. C. Hanner, August 30, 1922, for the sum of $73,983 and the building was erected under Mr. King's supervision. The total cost of the building, grounds and equipment was $110,000.

The Albertson Public Library was a fine, limestone building with four tall Greek Doric columns topped with a carving of draped Grecian figures. Eleven broad white steps led up to the entrance, and a long low wall along Central Avenue was covered with trailing lantana. Just inside the tall doors, a large skylighted rotunda added to the natural light admitted through large windows reaching almost to the ceiling. If you stood directly under the dome, you could see the head librarian — first Miss Brumbaugh, then Miss Wendel — in her little office on the balcony over the first floor.

Glass floors in the stacks were designed to let the light penetrate from one floor to another, but they also created "shocking" situations when static electricity sparked the woolen-clothed patrons in cool winters. The heating plant was not installed until 1938, and in later years the building leaked terribly in the heavy rains.
There was a separate Children's Room in the Albertson from the very beginning, and story hours and vacation reading clubs were held regularly. A garden and entrance to the Children's Department on the Rosalind Avenue side were added in 1935 as a result of a gift from Miss Annetta O'B. Walker of Portland, Maine.

Sorosis donated all suitable books from their library to swell the original collection of 12,000 to more than 15,000 and then the City purchased books so that the Library began with a collection of 21,000 volumes.

On November 8, 1923, the doors of the Library were opened to the public.

Clara Elizabeth Wendel

Three Directors in 50 Years

Miss Olive Brumbaugh, of Frankfort, Indiana, was employed as Librarian and reported for duty on May 1, 1923. Miss Brumbaugh served as head librarian for twenty years until she resigned on January 1, 1943, to marry W. G. Morris of Littlefield, Texas.

On February 1, 1943, Miss Clara Elizabeth Wendel, a graduate of Florida State University and the University of Michigan, formerly instructor of Library Science at Florida State University, succeeded Miss Brumbaugh. She took a year's leave in September 1945 to earn a Master of Arts in Library Science at the University of Chicago. During her absence Miss Miriam E. Bass was Acting Librarian.

Miss Wendel served for 27 years and saw the staff grow from ten, all of whom could be listed in annual reports, to a troop of 150, all dedicated to giving the most personalized service possible. Miss Wendel retired on November 1, 1970 and Glenn F. Miller became only the third director of the library in its first five decades.
Mr. Miller had been director of the Genesee County Library in Flint, Michigan for two and a half years when he joined the Orlando System as Assistant Director in June 1969. Mr. Miller holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science and a Master's in Library Science from the University of Michigan.

Besides Miss Wendel and Miss Brumbaugh, staff members who have given at least twenty years service to the library include Mrs. Edwina Weldon Cooper (now deceased), Mrs. Lois Powell Ledford, Mrs. Estelle Bailey Harris, Mrs. China Henline Williams, Mrs. Claudine Wallace (now deceased), Miss Binnie Boynton (still on the staff), Mrs. Aleena Dawson, Mrs. Sara Foster, and Mrs. Eileen Willis (still on the staff).

Governing the Library...

Originally and still, the Orlando Public Library is a municipal agency supported by the city and governed by a board of directors appointed by the Mayor and the City Council. The Board in turn appoints the director of the library. Board members are appointed for five year terms and may succeed themselves.

Today, non-city areas contract with the library Board for library service outside Orlando, and their agencies have non-voting representation on the Board.

The Board is responsible to the community for the operation of the library. Theirs is the policy role which maintains the library as an ongoing information marketplace for the area, and they meet regularly to review the operation and set the direction for library services.

In February 1923, the City appointed the following Board of Directors: Mr. Sexton Johnson, President; Mrs. W. T. Jamieson; Mrs. F. W. Taylor; Mrs. T. P. Warlow; and Captain Charles Albertson.

C. DeWitt Miller was appointed to the board in 1925 and holds the record for length of tenure on the library board, having served as president of the board from 1932 until 1967. Always a community leader, Miller was in his early years the owner and manager of the Wyoming Hotel, a beautiful white frame winter resort that used to be on the corner of Magnolia and Amelia. Later he managed the Orlando Country Club and Orange Memorial Hospital and then became founding president of the Blue Cross of Florida. As an ardent supporter of a
growing library, DeWitt Miller helped Orlando’s library bloom from an annual budget of $35,000 in 1925 to a major community asset spending almost $800,000 a year for service through ten branches, two bookmobiles and a beautiful downtown center.

Other long-term board members include two honorary life members, William J. Capehart and Miss Mabelle O’Neal, plus J. F. Schumann, E. G. Duckworth, Mrs. E. S. Bridges, Judge Claude Edwards and Charles Brumback.

On the current Board of Directors are J. Edward Greaves, James Collier, Herbert A. Bargeon, Jr., and Lucy (Mrs. R. L.) Edgerton. Former city commissioner John B. Newsom has served as president of the Board from July 1967 through December 1969, and again from July 1971 through the present time.

**Counties Appoint Advisory Committee**

Today, both Orange and Osceola Counties have Library Advisory Committees to oversee their interests in library service contracted with the Orlando Library Board. After Orange County residents voted in 1963 to be taxed for their share of free library service, new branches were established and bookmobile service was improved with the advice and assistance of the County Library Advisory Committee appointed by the County Commission. In the beginning, Mrs. Richard Jolley, chairman, met with the Library Board as a liaison member. Other members of the Committee were Mr. Bert Roper, vice chairman; Mrs. Frank Barnett; Mrs. G. B. Fishback; Mr. C. M. Walters; and Mrs. J. Brian Wood. The assistance and support of former County Commissioner F. B. Surrigne and County Planner Donald Greer were also of great value.

During the first year, Mrs. James Staples resigned from the original Committee when she joined the library staff. Mrs. William Crawford also resigned. She was replaced by Mrs. J. Brian Wood as the Azalea Park representative.

On the current Orange County Advisory Committee, Albert C. Valdes, who contributed much in the development of county service, was recently replaced by Mrs. Calvert K. (Juanita) Hartle as chairman. Others on the committee are Mrs. Charles L. (Nancy) Olds, Mrs. Michael J. (Carol) Murphy, William F. Long, and Russell E. Theisen.

Free service has also been extended to Osceola County since 1969 by contract with the commissioners there. The original committee remains with one exception. Mrs. Murray (Rae) W. Overstreet is chairman, with Mrs. Paul E. (Annie Laurie) Kirkpatrick, William T. Wallis, Robert Fisk, Mrs. J. J. (Gail) Griffin, Jr., and William Prather. Mrs.
W. B. (Maxine) Makinson has been replaced by Mrs. Jerry (Sis) Ivey, and Mrs. J. J. Griffin, Jr. was the original chairman of the Osceola County Library Advisory Committee.

Each advisory committee is responsible to their commissioners, and a representative meets with the library Board as non-voting members to assure the library's responsiveness to the communities they represent.

MEMBERS OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Sexton Johnson, President 1923 - 1924**
Mrs. F. W. Taylor 1923 - 1930
Mrs. T. P. Warlow 1923 - 1925
Mrs. W. T. Jamieson 1923 - 1931 (President 1927 - 1931)
**Captain Charles Albertson 1923 - 1932**
**Dr. W. F. Blackman, 1924 - 1927 (President 1924 - 1927)**
**C. DeWitt Miller, 1925 - 1967 (President 1932 - July 1967) 42 yrs.**
J. F. Schumann, 1927 - 1946
Miss Mabelle O'Neal, Nov. 1930 - Jan. 1967 (made Honorary Life Member in 1966) 36 years
Mrs. G. R. Ramsey, 1931 - 1933
E. G. Duckworth, 1932 - 1960, 28 years
Mrs. E. S. Bridges, 1933 - 1958, 25 years
W. J. Capehart, 1946 - 1967, 21 years (made Honorary Life Member in 1970)
Charles Brumback, 1960 - 1968
Charles E. LeGette, 1967 - 1972
JAMES COLLIER, 1968 - present
**Herbert A. Bargeon, Jr., 1970 - present**
Mrs. W. N. Ellis, October 1972 - July 1973
Mrs. R. L. Edgerton, July 1973 - present
John B. Newsom, December 1966 - present (President July 1967 - 1969, and July 1971 to present)
Money Matters . . .

Orange County was the first in Florida to provide bookmobile service to its residents. It was also the first to provide a stable and satisfactory solution to the problem of library service in rapidly expanding urban areas. That system, however, did not come until forty years after the Albertson opened, and only after years of spasmodic budgeting and tenuous levels of service.

An Orlando city bond election bought the land and built the original Albertson Public Library and another bond issue in Orlando financed the current main building. City residents pay their share of the library's operating expenses through the city budget.

When the library opened in 1923, free service was extended to all residents of Orange County, even though the County contributed no funds. With the 1929 Depression, though, it became necessary to discontinue free County service, and a $2.00 fee was set for a county card.

In 1949, the Orange County Commission appropriated $10,000 for the operation of a bookmobile which was donated to the library by the Sorosis of Orlando, and Orange County became the first in the state to have county-wide library service.

In the mid-Fifties, the City of Winter Garden and the City of Apopka each provided quarters and personnel for increased Bookmobile stops in their communities. In 1961-62, the Pine Hills Library Association also raised some local money to open a library station, and Gordon Barnett rented them a store building in the Pine Hills Shopping Center for one dollar a year. During these years communities throughout Orange County were clamoring for more and more library service. By 1960 the original County Bookmobile, a converted school bus, was no longer roadworthy by any standards. The need for larger and more stable financing of county library services was becoming increasingly apparent.

In 1957-58, the County appropriation, which had been steadily rising year by year, was increased to $30,000 to qualify for a two-year Federal Library Grant for the improvement of rural library service. With these funds, the library expanded and improved its bookmobile service and began giving free service at the main library and branches to county residents on November 1, 1957. Since the funds from the County did not cover the cost of county service, and the appropriation was not increased as expected for 1958-59, free county service had to be discontinued again. A fee of $3.00 for adults and $2.00 for children was set.

A new Bookmobile, bought with some donated funds and a County appropriation, was dedicated in May 1961. Many of the bookmobile
stops were too busy to adequately serve their patrons, and several were obvious locations for permanent branch stations open several days each week. Obviously, it was time to form a county-wide free library system to meet the needs of urbanized areas outside Orlando and Winter Park.

Finally in March 1963, a straw vote was held to determine if Orange County residents were willing to pay a tax for complete library service. The results were inconclusive: 4,204 for and 4,248 against.

The County Commissioners did not appropriate any funds for County service in 1963-64. Instead they once again put the question to the people, to be voted on November 5, 1963. The result was a vote of almost three to one in favor of a tax up to one mill, to be paid only by residents of Orange County outside Orlando, Winter Park and Maitland. Winter Park and Maitland support independent libraries, and Orlando residents already pay their share through the city budget.

A one-half mill tax was levied for the 1964-65 fiscal year, and the County contracted with the Orlando Public Library to provide the service. On November 2, 1964, Orlando’s Main Library was opened free of charge to county residents outside Winter Park and Maitland. The College Park, Colonialtown and Booker T. Washington branches also began free service, and within a year there were new permanent branches in Pine Hills, West Orange (Winter Garden), North Orange (Apopka), Azalea Park, Washington Shores, and Fort Gatlin.

The solid tax base, however, did not bring the end to fluctuations in the County’s appropriations. In December a county-wide computer error was discovered and a general millage adjustment brought the library’s rate to .4 mill, a rate that was expected to yield $270,000. In July 1966, a second error was discovered. Accurate input showed that the yield would be $45,000 short. To make up for the deficit, branch hours had to be cut from 27 to only 10 hours per week in September

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<th>Orange Cty.</th>
<th>Osceola Cty.</th>
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<td>25,941</td>
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of that year. Coming so soon after the new branches had been established, this caused great protest in the community, and the County Commissioners responded by allocating emergency funds to bring each branch back up to a 5 day, 20 hour week level by November, 1966.

Today, several of the ten branches are open over forty hours a week. Orange County's appropriations have increased steadily, and in the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1973, Orange County residents will contribute over a million dollars toward OPL's two-million-dollar budget.

In 1966 a group of library-minded residents of St. Cloud and Kissimmee asked the Osceola County Commission to appoint a citizens committee to study the need for a county library program in Osceola.

On the recommendation of this group, the County Commission requested Florida State Library to survey the County's current library resources and future needs.

Early in 1968, State Librarian F. William Summers submitted his report, recommending that Osceola County contract with the Orlando Public Library to provide county-wide service. The Orlando Public Library Board entered into the contract with Osceola County on the basis that Library service would be given only to the extent of the funds received. The contractual service began on November 1, 1968, at which time Osceola County residents gained free use of the Orlando Public Library and County Library System. The OPL System now includes two branches in Osceola County, one in Kissimmee and one in St. Cloud, and the Traveling Branch serves outlying communities as well as the Road Prison, some retirement complexes, the children's home and nursing homes. Osceola County's support of library services has similarly increased over the years. The Osceola County Commissioners have budgeted $112,000 for the fiscal 1973-74, an increase of $10,000 over the previous year.

In addition to continuing appropriations from Orlando, Orange and Osceola counties, the overall revenue for the OPL System includes State Aid (in fiscal 72-73 almost $29,000 through Orange County and almost $8,000 through Osceola County); around $25,000 from overdue fines; plus $50,000 from such miscellaneous sources as Federal grants ($42,000 in 72-73) and fee cards. Since Winter Park and Maitland allocate their library taxes to independent libraries, residents within those city limits pay $12 a year for a fee card that gives a family the privilege of checking out materials from the OPL System.
Board President John Newsom and Director Glenn Miller hold 1971 John Cotton Dana Award, presented to the library in the English-speaking world with the best program of community involvement.

The Main Thing is the Service . . .

The Orlando Public Library is a marketplace of information, a multi-media storehouse, a community center. Its vast and varied collections are designed to satisfy as much as possible the information and recreation needs of the people it serves in 1973. The key to making them usable, though, is the dedication and enthusiasm of the service-oriented librarians on the staff.

One might think that 393,000 books could fill any request from a patron. But it takes another hundred thousand pamphlets and clippings to catch material not found in books; sixty thousand pictures to fill displays and to inspire artists and costumers; ten thousand reels of microfilm to hold past issues of the New York Times and the Sentinel and hundreds of periodicals; eight thousand records and more than a thousand slides to show works of art. In addition there are 150 films, including some early silent classics, that can be checked out for home viewing, and almost 200 reproductions of great works of art, all framed and ready for hanging in home, classroom or office for a month.
Such numbers don’t begin to tell the story of OPL’s success, though, and neither does adding the fact that over 1.3 million pieces of material were checked out of the OPL system in its fiftieth year. Glenn Miller, director of OPL since 1970, boasts instead of the good attitudes of the staff and their development of outreach programs that serve people who otherwise would not or could not use the library’s services.

**Got A Question? Use Ready Reference!**

At OPL, being a marketplace of information doesn’t mean simply having the answers to questions available to look up. It means providing staff to find the answers to questions for you, and to help dig through the quantity of resources you might want to use.

A continuing trend for OPL in its first fifty years has been emphasis on its basic information service. People are heartily encouraged to call in questions to be answered on the phone.

As a result, OPL staff answered 250,000 questions in its anniversary year, about a quarter of those through the ten branch libraries. That’s the number of reference questions, and doesn’t include the standard which-way-to-the-fiction kind. Only about thirty percent of these questions come from students of all ages. The rest are from people in all walks of life; businessmen, clubwomen, housewives, scholars, repairmen, labor leaders, social workers, and industrialists.

**High Interest Items**

The Seventies have brought increasing emphasis on high-interest collections in a trend away from complete reliance on material of “permanent value.” In some ways OPL is helping set national patterns in this. Paperbacks, for instance, are found now in every department, and are proving to be an economical way to provide multiple copies of titles that are of vital interest to many patrons now but might be in little demand in a relatively short while.

The Young Adult Department, shooting for an audience in junior high to early college age, stocks contemporary posters that can be checked out to decorate teen environments. Their 33 rpm record albums by popular rock groups circulate faster than almost any other material in the library. Comic books are also a staple of the Young Adult corner. They’re another new kind of library material that is there to give the patron what he wants to read, not just what has traditionally been considered “worthwhile.”
Framed art reproductions were first purchased for circulation in 1967 when the new building brought ample space to display them. Today there are almost 200 fine art prints — by a full range of artists including Rembrandt, Picasso, Andrew Wyeth and Peter Max — available for loan for a month at no charge.

For Disabled Readers

Talking Books re-open a closed door especially for those who can’t see well enough or hold a book long enough to use regular print books. Talking Books are available from OPL in a complete range of titles for adults, children, and Spanish-speaking people with almost any reading taste. Current magazines, classic novels, adventure, suspense, religion and popular contemporary titles all come in recorded form on Talking Books.

The qualifying reading disability doesn’t have to be a permanent condition, so a person who is only temporarily unable to hold a book can apply for Talking Books service. As a matter of fact, there are many more physically handicapped than blind or visually handicapped people in the group of 6,000 people who are estimated to be potential users of Talking Books in OPL’s service area.

The phonographs for Talking Books are provided free, and they are installed and repaired at no cost by the Telephone Pioneers. The books are also mailed postage-free both to and from the patrons.

Every other month, Talking Book users get a catalog of new titles that are available to them. Each catalog lists the latest best-sellers as well as older books that have remained popular over the years.

The Talking Books section of OPL is officially designated as a Sub-regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped which is partially supported by federal and state grants. Because of this special funding, the Talking Books are available to residents of Winter Park, Maitland and Seminole County without paying the usual $12-per-year fee charged to those residents for OPL library services.

LARGE PRINT BOOKS are another real boon to those who are “hard of seeing,” but don’t need the recorded books. Mainly of a recreational nature, there are over 500 books printed in large, clear type that is almost a quarter-inch tall. Choices range from Shakespeare plays to Zane Grey adventures, and they include the Bible, cookbooks, recent best-sellers, and dictionaries and atlases.
Getting Over The Read-Ability Hurdle

Toward the end of serving all potential users, not just those “easy marks” who have already made reading a habit, OPL maintains several special collections.

The easy reading series is a case in point. Not necessarily information-oriented, these are written to interest adolescents and adults but with a simpler vocabulary that wouldn’t stump a person who is still building his reading skills. Titles include adventures, like “Fail-Safe” and Jack London’s “Call of the Wild,” time-honored favorites like “A Tree Grows in Brooklyn” and “The Diary of Anne Frank,” and a whole series on people who have a variety of jobs.

The adult basic education collection also seeks a specialized audience: grown-ups who are learning to read. These books are part of a comprehensive learning program developed by Frank Laubach to be used in learning to read as an adult, using the “Each One Teach One” approach. The Adult Literacy League and a group at First Baptist Church have volunteers who spend many hours with people sampling the basic education section. You will find English skillbooks and help in “writing your own letters,” advice on city living and good manners, chapters on the development of American democratic institutions, and a three-part story of Jesus. These are interesting and helpful for native Americans as well as foreign-born individuals who want to become more skilled in English.

Spanish speaking people also enjoy a special section of OPL since many Spanish titles were added this year. The section includes encyclopedias, almanacs, a nurse’s manual, two newspapers, and several magazines. The books, 350 in all, were mostly translations from British and U.S. fiction at first, but authors from Spain and Central and South America are being added as funds permit.

Wonder About Your Forebears?

A special collection can also be a source of pride because it is so complete. An example is the section of OPL which draws genealogical researchers from all over the state to pursue ancestors through the Local History and Genealogy Department of OPL.

The Genealogy Collection is one of the finest in the southeast partly because of the original collection that launched the library in 1923. Capt. Charles L. Albertson, for whom the first public library in
Orlando was named, was an ardent genealogist. His gift of 12,000 volumes that formed the nucleus of the library’s resources in 1923 was particularly rich in genealogical materials for the New England states, New York and Pennsylvania. The collection now carries his name. To the original Albertson Collection have been added many hundreds of books as well as U.S. Census Schedules from many states, some going back to 1800. At this time, the library is accumulating a complete set of microfilm of the U.S. Census of 1850, the first one that listed everybody individually by name.

OPL was designated the State Library of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in 1929. With 1,300 genealogical titles, the DAR collection emphasizes family histories and the southeastern states, in addition to the DAR lineage.

The Local History Department boasts microfilm of almost all Sentinel Star issues back to 1911. The Sentinel and OPL are working together to fill in the gaps that marred either the paper’s or the library’s collections of early issues of the newspaper. OPL’s staff also started and maintains an index to the Sentinel from 1966 on. Pictures of “old” Orlando and Orange County are also on file to provide invaluable comparisons of “then and now” for interested patrons.
Outreach Programs . . .

Obviously, Library service is much more than checking out materials to those who can come into your buildings. A major challenge of the next fifty years will be finding ways to serve more individuals whose circumstances give them special requirements in terms of the kinds of materials they need or their access to it.

Sharing Literature with Children

How could a limited staff with limited space and money provide frequent, meaningful literature experiences for the 85,000 pre-school and school-aged boys and girls in OPL’s service area?

Knowing that children who are read to, learn to read more readily, the Children’s Department of OPL has enlisted the aid of thousands of adults who in some way work with children. Led by Carolyn Peterson, head of the department, the staff developed in 1971 a workshop for Sunday School teachers, day care center and Head Start assistants, Scout den mothers and troop leaders, playground leaders and teenagers in training for jobs in child care.

Participants in a workshop learn how to read picture books effectively, to tell stories, to make puppets, to use the flannel board, and to use the variety of literature presentations available in audiovisual formats. The workshops are based on the premise that the participants and the library staff are colleagues working for the common good of all children. A good workshop leader will share her knowledge of children and children’s literature without seeming to teach or preach, and hope to leave them feeling dedicated to the belief that children need to hear stories.

Instead of waiting for the small segment of the community that would be coming into the library, the staff solicits participants and takes the Sharing Literature with Children workshop out into the public and private agencies that request it. The response has been well worth the effort of conducting 300 workshops for almost 4,000 people in just two years. Day care teachers and aides make a habit of borrowing books for story hours, and many centers schedule regular field trips to the library for story hours, feature-length film showings, and to read books. Participation in the children’s reading program itself nearly doubled
in the first summer after the Sharing Literature with Children project was launched, and circulation figures have escalated, especially in the branch libraries.

The Florida Library Association gave its 1973 Award for Outstanding Library Development to OPL's Sharing Literature program, and a state grant will soon make it possible for staff from the Children's Department to help other Florida libraries establish similar systems of outreach.

**Prisoners Are People**

Going one step further in serving people who can't come to the library for their information, OPL has been taking materials out to correctional institutions and half-way houses since early 1972.

Inmates and staff of the Orange County Jail and the prison farm at 33rd Street had almost 4,000 paperback books and periodicals to choose from in the first year of the limited outreach activity. The Orlando City Jail and the residence of the Re-entry Project were added in the summer of 1973. The minimum security prison in Kissimmee also gets regular bookmobile service.

Mrs. Gretchen Conduitte of OPL set up the service, which was established with the cooperation of correctional officers who have increasing interest in education and reading facilities for the inmates. In these first months of jail service, there is no librarian on duty within the institutions, and special requests are being handled through counselors and teachers of adult education classes held in the jails for the Orange County School System.

One of OPL's priorities is to serve those who have no other library service available to them. Men and women serving a sentence have so much time on their hands, time that could well be spent reading and learning, that it is entirely appropriate to make an effort to provide books they want. Inmates request everything from best-sellers reviewed in newsmagazines and information on job skills, to pleasure reading on cultural heroes, astrology, and old maps of sunken treasures.

In a similar vein, the Young Adult Department of OPL is giving books and consultation on appropriate magazine subscriptions to several places housing troubled youngsters, including the Edgewood Ranch, the Youth Hall of Great Oaks Village, the McCoy Boys Base, and Sumter Correctional Institution.
Branching Out...

From the earliest years, library planning included distribution of books from points in addition to the main downtown building. This basic objective—to maximize public accessibility—has remained paramount until today the OPL system is helping set national standards for outreach programs for libraries.

Stations in the schools were started in 1925 and by 1930 there were 22 stations—ten in the city and twelve in the county. In 1930 there were more than 9,000 books in the Schools Collection, but there were no funds to replace worn out books or buy new titles so the service was discontinued by 1945.

The Booker T. Washington Branch was opened during 1924 in rented quarters on South Terry Street. A permanent building was erected on the corner of Jackson and Terry in 1954, and this and the main downtown library are the only city-owned buildings in the Orlando Library System.

When W.P.A. help became available in 1938, the Colonialtown Branch was opened in the Colonialtown Woman's Club. This branch was moved to a rented building at 1111 Park Lake Avenue in 1955 and to 1401 Park Lake Avenue in 1959. When the main downtown library was greatly expanded in 1966, the Colonialtown Branch was discontinued because it was not practical to operate another facility only a mile from the new building.

The Grand Avenue Branch opened in 1942 in the Grand Avenue Woman's Club Building. It remained there until 1956, when a small bookmobile, the Traveling Branch, was donated to the library and made Grand Avenue one of its stops.

Branch libraries are sometimes moved to respond to population shifts or changes in traffic patterns. The old College Park Branch is the classic example of that. It started in July 1950 at 703 Smith Street in College Park and moved six years later to 2518 Edgewater Drive. Those quarters were enlarged in 1961, before it was moved again in April 1966 to Edgewater Shopping Center. Since September 1972 it has been located in the Northgate Shopping Center, and it's now called the Northgate Library.

The Traveling Branch, a small bookmobile, was a gift of an anonymous Friend of the Library in 1956. For the first ten years it served city residents and neighborhood stops and close-in areas of Orange County. Since 1966, when the County Bookmobile took over the parts of the route that were still necessary after the big downtown building opened, the Traveling Branch has served areas of Osceola County.
The Pine Hills Branch was one of the first additions to the system when Orange County residents approved the library millage in 1963. The Pine Hills Library Association raised money for a library station even before the millage was passed. They had found a location in the Pine Hills Shopping Center on West Colonial, and it was rent-free thanks to the generosity of the Center owner, Mr. Gordon Barnett. By April 1969, the branch had to expand and take in the adjacent building, and the library began paying rent for the enlarged quarters.

In November 1964, the North Orange Branch opened in Apopka, replacing a popular bookmobile stop at 312 Central Avenue. In May 1969, it moved to Palm Plaza Shopping Center, and in April 1973 it moved within that center to its current location in a larger building.

Also in November 1964, the West Orange Branch replaced the former Winter Garden Bookmobile Station. Within a year, the City of Winter Garden had purchased two lots to hold as a site for a new branch library building. In 1967, the Orange County Commission acquired the land from the City of Winter Garden for $20,000, which was in turn contributed toward construction. This plus $6,000 raised by Friends of the Library of West Orange, plus $30,000 from Orange County Commission and other miscellaneous added up to $59,000 to match a Federal Grant in an equal amount.

The County Commission appointed an Advisory Board to plan the building. Mr. Don Greer, County Planner, was project chairman. Other members of the planning group were Mr. George Barley, Mayor of Winter Garden; Mr. Dean Engstrom and Mr. James McKey, representing the West Orange Friends of the Library; Mrs. G. B. Fishback, chairman of the County Library Advisory Committee; and Miss Clara E. Wendel, Director of the Orlando Public Library and Orange County Library System. The Commission also named Mr. Arthur White of Orlando as architect and Mr. Cecil Beach, Director of the Tampa Public Library, as library building consultant.

Final cost of the West Orange Branch was $146,000, including furnishings, for a beautiful permanent building with 5,120 square feet. It was dedicated on April 20, 1969.

By April 1965, the Fort Gatlin Branch was established at 105 Gatlin Avenue south of Orlando. About the same time, the Azalea Park Branch began operation on Lake Barton Road. That became the Eastland Branch when it was moved to a much larger location on East Colonial in July 1972.

In Osceola County, Kissimmee’s privately-operated Hart Memorial Library was succeeded by the Kissimmee Branch Library, which opened on December 17, 1968, at 305 Broadway. The St. Cloud Branch Library began operating in the Veteran’s Memorial Library building at 1012 Massachusetts Avenue, St. Cloud, on December 1, 1968. The Kissimmee Branch is open 44 hours a week; St. Cloud, 32 hours.
The Bookmobile and Shut-In Service

The Bookmobile was the vehicle that made Orange County the first in Florida to provide county-wide service to its residents. Again it was the Sorosis, the same group that had the first lending library in the area and helped in the campaign to open the Albertson Public Library in 1923, that was instrumental in making this service a reality. Under the coordination of Ruth Gilbert Smith, the Sorosis divided themselves into twenty teams to raise the $6,000 necessary to buy a school bus and convert it into a traveling library. As one of their first projects, the Friends of the Library sponsored a local bill in the State Legislature in 1949, a bill that enabled the County commission to appropriate money to operate the bookmobile, and Sorosis members helped them to secure its passage. The County Commission then appropriated $10,000, and bookmobile service began on December 1, 1949. Stops and stations were established at population centers throughout Orange County, and the stops with the highest circulations eventually became prime considerations for full-fledged branches as the county-wide system developed.

After hundreds of thousands of miles, this Bookmobile was taken off the road and a new $20,000 Gerstenslager bookmobile was dedicated in May of 1961. The Orange County Commission paid almost $12,000 of the purchase cost with the rest coming from a bookmobile fund drive.

By 1963, the first Bookmobile was no longer roadworthy, but neither was it completely ready to retire. Instead it was set up in Washington Shores as a Library Station. This lasted until August, 1965, when the Washington Shores Station was moved to new quarters in the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist at 1000 Bethune Drive. When the Church expanded its own building, it also provided additional space for the library, and that is the location of the Washington Shores Station today.

Osceola County Bookmobile service, using the Library’s Traveling Branch vehicle, began in March 1969. It serves outlying communities (Intercession City, Narcoossee, and Pine Grove), as well as the minimum security Road Prison, retirement communities, nursing homes and the children’s home.

Almost like a bookmobile service but much more personalized is the library’s shut-in service that brings books and records and other library materials to those who can’t get out of the house to a branch. The Orlando Public Library is one of the few in the country that continues to provide staff for such highly individualized delivery systems to its patrons. Several other use only volunteers.
The New Building . . .

The main Orlando Public Library building was dedicated on August 7, 1966 as the first of three stages of a main library for the Orlando and Orange County Library System. At that time, designers projected that the second stage would be needed within five years, and the population explosion brought with the then-unexpected Disney attraction, the new state university, and the Naval Training Camp established since have made the expansion even more mandatory.

The architect was John M. Johansen of New Canaan, Connecticut and he called his design a “composition in monolithic concrete,” an assembly of forms, “as colonies of shelled animals assemble or grow together, to suggest the continuing process of growth.” Johansen saw in the varied forms a format that would ease the addition of the 150,000 square feet that is now in the City’s capital improvement program. That “addition” will quadruple the available floor space.

In a feature article on OPL’s design, Architectural Record commented on its over-all air of handsome unity and quietness. The first local reviews were not unanimously favorable, though. Director Clara Wendel reported in an issue of Library Journal a year after the building
opened, "Orlando's new main library has had an emotional impact on the city unmatched by any structure in its history." The poured concrete building became an object of local controversy as soon as the construction forms were removed, and "When is it going to be finished?" became a familiar question for any library staffer.

The unfinished quality came from the rough concrete surfaces, both inside and out, carefully textured by the rich grain of rough-sawn wooden formwork that is a signature of architect Johansen. Once the Florida sun had seasoned the concrete to even silvery tone, though, enthusiastic admiration of the library center became almost universal, and much national attention came to Orlando because of the structure.

In addition to its rugged beauty, the untreated concrete is ideal from a maintenance standpoint. It simply needs no cleaning, painting or refinishing whatsoever, and that's a real tax-saver for this public institution.

The building is constructed on four levels, facing Rosalind at the corner of Central. The lower level, which is not a true basement because of the sloping site, houses the Children's Department, plus non-public areas for Graphic Arts, Acquisitions, Extension, and storage. An auditorium seating 200 and a conference room that will hold about 25 people are in constant demand for community meetings. Provided a session is open to the public at no charge and is not religious or political (as opposed to governmental) in nature, the rooms are scheduled on a first-come basis.

The General Information and Reference Dept. is at the center of the main floor which also houses the Local History and Genealogy Department and a Reading Lounge on the north, and the Young Adult Department and Community Relations office on the south. The mezzanine-type second floor is being re-arranged as this written to allow more efficient service for telephone and walk-in patrons, and also to provide more room for patrons and materials. The public service desks of the Fine Arts Department and the Business, Science & Technology Department are being merged at the top of the stairs, and most of the library's microfilm records are being brought to the Audio-Visual area in the southeast corner. The administrative offices are at the front of the second floor, and clerestory windows skylight the central reading area. On the roof, the staff room with its small kitchen is glassed in on three sides, and there is a tiled terrace with planters and benches.

The interior of the building is open, airy and well-lighted. Both of the public floors take full advantage of the light from random-width two-story-tall windows, set back in the concrete to reduce glare. Oiled walnut furniture by Jens Risom and beige Belgian linen draperies harmonize with the natural finish of the concrete walls, and charcoal carpet tames the noise that arises from the informal of-course-you-can-talk atmosphere.
Shelves added to accommodate the growing number of books encroach on reading areas, and part of the big comfortable periodicals reading lounge overlooking Lake Eola has already given way to burgeoning collections of fiction, biographies, and Florida information on the first floor. The library has reached the point where it's necessary to take one book off the shelf for each one that is added. There's just not enough room for everything.

The circulation area in the lobby often gets incredibly crowded because more than ten thousand books and other materials have to be checked out through the two turnstiles each week. Space limitations will hamper the orderly expansion of service as the service area of the library undergoes its unprecedented growth.

**Construction**

Landmarks in the building of the current library center are worth recording. On May 29, 1962, the freeholders of Orlando passed a four-part Civic Improvements Bond Issue, which provided $1,000,000 for a new library building. Dr. Frank B. Sessa, Director of Miami Public Library, was appointed in September of that year to be library building consultant to draw up a statement of program for the proposed building. The architect for the building, John M. Johansen, was appointed on February 26, 1963, and Martin Van Buren, of Charlotte, North Carolina, was named as interior design consultant a year later.

On April 29, 1964, the Albertson Public Library closed and during the next week moved into a temporary location. It reopened at 905 North Orange, and the people of Orlando had a converted furniture store for a library for a little over two years.

Final drawings for the new building were approved by the Library Board and the City Council on June 5, 1964. The City advertised for bids and the H. L. Coble Construction Company submitted the lowest of five base bids — $1,264,800. The construction contract was awarded to the Coble Company on September 14, and Big Chief, Inc. had demolished the old building and cleared the site within two weeks. The groundbreaking ceremonies were held on October 19, 1964, and actual construction began a few weeks later.

**Changing The Name**

In May 1965, the City Council approved the Library Board's recommendation that the Library officially be designated the "Orlando Public Library." When Captain Charles L. Albertson gave his collection of 12,000 books to the City of Orlando in 1920, it was agreed that the City would construct a library building and name it for him. By 1965, the book collection numbered over 200,000; less than 2,000 of them were from the Albertson gift. The other original books had
been withdrawn from the collection as a result of forty years' wear and tear. The Orlando taxpayers had spent nearly three million dollars to operate the Library during the forty years. They had financed the construction of the million-dollar-plus new building. The genealogy collection in the new Orlando Public Library is named for Captain Charles L. Albertson, since he was greatly interested in the subject, and a memorial plaque just inside the front doors commemorates his contribution to the Library.

Martin Van Buren, the interior design consultant, presented specifications for furnishings to the Library Board and the City Council late in September, 1965, and the City Council awarded furniture and equipment contracts totaling $185,000. The building was furnished from the capital funds of the City of Orlando. The Library closed in its temporary location at 905 North Orange Avenue on July 23 for a two-week move into the new building. The main Orlando Public Library building was finally dedicated on a rainy Sunday afternoon, August 7, 1966.
About the Friends . . .

In almost twenty-five years of focusing public attention on library services, the Friends of the Orlando Public Library have helped put over bond elections, financed listening centers and microfilm collections and video-cassette equipment that the library budget could not cover, sponsored forums and distinguished film series, and produced for several seasons the continuing television series DISCUSSION which airs on Channel 9. The Friends monthly newsletter, printed by the library, is one of OPL’s main channels of communication with the communities it serves.

In 1972 and 1973 they developed Ye Ole Book Sale in the Winter Park Mall that has netted $30,000 in two short years, including the volumes that OPL culled for its own collection. The money raised in this annual project goes right back to the community in the form of additional equipment and resources in the library’s public service programs.

Friends are also important as ambassadors of goodwill, and as supporters of legislation benefiting the library. They work as promoters and hosts of library-sponsored events, such as the National Humanities Forums in 1972. To celebrate OPL’s 50th Anniversary, the Friends are hosting a community-wide dinner at the Kahler Plaza on November 9.

The Friends sponsor Ye Olde Book Sale each year to raise money for library equipment.
In 1971 the Friends incorporated a Book Endowment program that makes memorial donations to the library a perpetual contribution. Each endowment of $150 earns enough interest to buy the library a worthwhile new book each year, without reducing the original $150. It may be an honor endowment, given in honor of someone on a birthday, holiday, anniversary or special occasion, or it may be a memorial endowment given in memory of a friend or loved one. Clara Wendel, director of OPL for 27 years, chairs the project.

Membership in the Friends of the Orlando Public Library is open to all. The annual dues start at $1.00 for senior citizens and students, $3.00 for adults, and $5.00 for family memberships. In this anniversary year, there are almost 700 members of the Friends.

The Friends were organized in March 1949 under the initial sponsorship of the Winter Park-Orlando Zonta Club. Mrs. Ruth McCullough Maguire was elected the president the first year, and was followed by Judge Victor Hutchins in 1950. Succeeding presidents were Mrs. Frank Gardner, Mrs. George Foote Dunham, Harold P. Danforth, Mrs. Walter Duranty, Mrs. Otis B. Lundquist, Dr. A. B. Sias, Mrs. H. R. Torrance, Mrs. J. Hilbert Sapp, Jack Shiffman, Harold E. Scott, Mrs. Zelig O. Wise, A. Henry Hoche, Judge Richard Keating, Russell Troutman, and currently Charles “Pete” Peterson.

There is also a Friends group in West Orange that is especially interested in the branch library located in Winter Garden. The current president of the Friends of the West Orange Branch is Ernest Hawk. Osceola County also enjoys the support of a Friends group behind its two branches, one in St. Cloud and the other in Kissimmee. Mrs. Robert Fisk is now president of the Friends of the Library of Osceola County.
Circulation Growth

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>133,480</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>314,849</td>
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Looking Ahead . . .

The year 1973 is in many ways a significant transition period for the library system. In the coming fiscal year, the budget will probably top two million dollars for the first time. As plans progress for the next phase of building that will quadruple the size of the library center, the OPL System seems well on its way to leaving its medium-sized position for large library status.

Better and more individualized service will be the goal as the library system grows. During the anniversary celebration, for instance, OPL is announcing a new Books-By-Mail service that will let a patron write in requests for almost any book in the library and have it delivered directly to his home mail box. Outreach programs such as the Sharing Literature with Children project described elsewhere will surely have an impact for years to come.

We can look forward to new formats of information as the multimedia aspects of OPL's holdings become even more useful. Starting this year, past issues of periodicals are being saved almost exclusively on microfilm, rather than being bound in their original paper form. Picture files, popular and classical records, film holdings and framed art reproductions are already standard circulating items. The library also has two video cassette systems to experiment with possibilities for involvement with broadcast and cable television.

*Photography speeds check-out process for over one million items a year.*
There is every probability that in the next few years the library will replace the card catalogs with a more useful and efficient system of looking up information.

Circulation procedures have already changed in the last couple of years to accommodate the mushrooming volume of materials being processed. A system including computer time and microfilm readers helps keep track of overdue books, and the library continues its policy of low-key reminders to redeem its materials. An electronic gadget called CHECKPOINT, installed in 1972, protects the growing collection by automatically setting off a buzzer if a patron tries to exit with library materials without checking them out. Finding smoother high-volume procedures will be a constant project in the next decade, the goal being to enable the library to serve individuals in more effective and personalized ways.

The new building, when it comes will not necessarily mean new services or new goals for the Orlando Public Library System. Instead it will mean more room that is desperately needed for people and for books, more room to provide specific library services to fill the highly specialized needs of the people who look to OPL for information and recreation. The test of new programs remains as always a question of service — the best possible library service to thousands of individual patrons each day.
PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

Reference and Research
Assistance, Guidance, Sources
(all departments)
Reference Research Information Service
Telephone Information Service; Book Reserves
Interlibrary Loan; Readers Advisory Service

Circulation of Materials
Books; Large Print Books
Recordings: Music, Language, Instruction, Spoken Arts
Periodicals; Pamphlets
Films 8mm, 16mm; Filmstrips 35mm
Art Slides; Framed Art Reproductions; Pictures
Talking Books For Blind and Physically Handicapped

Specialized Collections and Sources
Newspaper Index; Periodical Indexes; News Services
Florida, Orlando, Orange County Collections; Florida State Documents
Genealogy Collection; Florida DAR Genealogy Collection
U.S. Census Records
Fine Arts Department
Foreign Language Collection; Adult Learning to Read Materials
Consumer Guides; College Catalogs; Career Information
Maps, Atlases
Federal Laws, Regulations, Publications
City Directories; Telephone Directories
Club and Organization File
Financial Services; Annual Reports (major corporations)

Group Services
YA Class Visits; Sharing Literature With Children
Film Series
Book and Library Talks
Story Hours
Library Tours
Topical Programs; Program Assistance

Miscellaneous Services
Copying Machines
Microfilm Readers and Printers
Bibliographic Services
Topical Displays
Newsletter (Friends of the Library)
Meeting Rooms
Bookmobiles; Ten Branches

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DIRECTORY OF THE ORLANDO PUBLIC LIBRARY
AND THE ORANGE-OSCEOLA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

MAIN LIBRARY — 425-4694
Ten North Rosalind, Orlando
(Intersection of Central and Rosalind Avenues)

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON LIBRARY
548 West Jackson Street, 425-7319
(Intersection of Jackson and Terry Streets,
one block south of Church Street)

EASTLAND LIBRARY — 277-0021
Eastland Shopping Center
6038 E. Colonial Drive

FORT GATLIN LIBRARY — 859-0110
Fort Gatlin Shopping Center
(Intersection of S. Orange and Gatlin Avenues)

KISSIMMEE LIBRARY — 847-5829
305 Broadway, Kissimmee
(Intersection of Broadway Avenue and Dakin Street)

NORTH ORANGE LIBRARY — 889-3335
Palm Plaza Shopping Center, Apopka

NORTHGATE LIBRARY — 295-3613
Northgate Shopping Center
5019 Edgewater Drive

PINE HILLS LIBRARY — 295-3223
Pine Hills Shopping Center
Highway 50 West (Located in arcade)

ST. CLOUD LIBRARY — 892-3954
1012 Massachusetts Avenue, St. Cloud
(Between 10th Street and Highway 192)

WASHINGTON SHORES STATION — 293-8562
in the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist
1000 Bethune Drive (Between Orange Center Blvd. and Vineland Road)

WEST ORANGE LIBRARY — 656-4582
One East Cypress Street, Winter Garden
(West of Dillard Street near Winn-Dixie Shopping Center)

ORANGE COUNTY BOOKMOBILE AND
OSCEOLA COUNTY BOOKMOBILE
Headquarters at Main Library (425-4694, ext. 50)
Schedules of Bookmobile stops available at Main Library and Branches