

**Grand Opening
and
Eightieth Anniversary
Open House**

**Alexander
Mitchell
Library**

1884 – 1964

March 15, 1964
Kline Street South and Sixth Avenue
Aberdeen, South Dakota

WORDS OF WELCOME FROM PRESENT TRUSTEES

We, the members of the library board, welcome the citizens of Aberdeen and community to your new library

We have enjoyed, in a small way, contributing to the completion of a new library for the community

The story of the struggle for the new library unfolds in this brochure. On reading it, you will recognize that it was the highest type of civic leadership that gave Aberdeen one of the finest libraries in South Dakota. This dedication, in a small way, will give recognition to those citizens who gave of their time and their money so that you could enjoy the many advantages that a library of this kind offers to a community

Memorials, tax dollars and community leadership gave the citizens of our community this library Be proud of it and use it. Your children and our children will be better citizens and better Americans because you were willing to make the sacrifice to give your community the finest in library facilities.

For many, this may be your first contact with your library. We welcome you. After this dedication, we hope you will have a new appreciation for your library Let's all support it so that it will continue to make a substantial contribution to the cultural and intellectual growth of this community

Alexander Mitchell Library, Board of Trustees

Francis T Rinke, President

Herman Pickus, Vice President

Mrs. Kenneth Ulland, Secretary

Mrs. Frank Kraft

George J Rice

SIX MILLION BOOKS

Aberdeen was only two years old when Mr B. E. Hutchinson began to talk about organizing a library. It took only a year for the movement to gain enough supporters. On February 25, 1884, a meeting was held which has eventually led to the reading of more than six million books by the citizens of Aberdeen.

On that snowy evening, a group of citizens met to form the Aberdeen Library Association. Mr A. H. Caryl acted as chairman of the meeting. B. E. Hutchinson was chosen the first president and J H. Hauser the first vice-president. Frank Beard and J H. Perry were elected as directors. The program of the evening was a lecture by H. M. Marple on "Education in Our Public Schools."

On March 13, 1884, the Aberdeen Free Library Association was incorporated under territorial laws. This certificate, which now hangs in the South Dakota room of the Aberdeen library, bears the signatures of B. E. Hutchinson, J H. Hauser, F H. Hagerty, C. A. Ozias, F Beard and J H. Perry

This subscription library was maintained by the sale of memberships at 25¢ per month or \$1.50 per year. The registration book, which has been preserved, lists the first one thousand members. It reads like a list of early day Aberdeen citizens.

Interested and energetic library members also earned money for the library by such means as benefit lectures. The "Dakota Pioneer" reports one on March 21, 1884, by James E. Burke on the subject "Robert Burns." It was so interesting that the newspaper published the whole lecture in a later edition.

Another lecture was given on March 27, 1884, by the well known speaker, Mrs. Nellie E. Lee, whose subject was "Domestic Infelicities; or Facts and Fancies."

Aberdeen's first citizens remember the library as two rooms on the second floor of the Hagerty block. This also housed the telephone exchange and the telephone operator was often in charge of the books. Minutes of the Library Board show that the library was moved several times during this period. The City Directory for 1899-1900 lists it at 223 South Main.

It was customary for a Board Member to hold the title of librarian until 1914. The person in charge of the library was the assistant librarian. Miss Elnora Pleasants, Miss Belle McCrae, Miss Elva Crain, Miss Genevieve Taubman, Miss Clara Wright, and Miss Nellie Alley were all assistant librarians during the early period.

The name most often remembered was Miss Elnora Pleasants. Her annual report to the Library Board on July 8, 1893, gives some interesting figures. The report covers the period April 2, 1892, to July 8, 1893. For that period 2,599 books were circulated and 2,860 visitors used the reading room. An average of seven volumes was loaned per day, and there were eight visitors per day in the reading room. The minutes further report that

the recently appointed board members were August Witte, C. E. Reed, S. H. Jumper and Emma Cranmer Mr Witte was elected president. C. E. Reed was elected librarian. Miss Elnora Pleasants was appointed assistant librarian at a salary of \$30 per month. She reports that the library had just moved to a new location on June 17, 1893.

The library was maintained by popular subscription until the late 1890's when, under general state law, it was turned over to the city Board minutes record a discussion of proposals for mill levy for library support, but there are no records to show what funds were received from the city at this time.

Senator James H. Kyle headed a group that worked several years to obtain funds for a library building. Finally in 1900 it was announced that Andrew Carnegie would give the sum of \$15,000 for the purpose, with the city agreeing to provide funds for maintenance. This would amount to ten per cent or \$1,500 per year

Several sites for the library were offered, and after much discussion the offer of Mr C. H. Pryor was accepted. He donated 150 feet by 150 feet on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Lincoln Street. Mr Van Metre, architect, was appointed to plan a suitable building. By 1901, Mr Andrew Fossum was awarded the contract to construct the building.

An Open House was held on July 15, 1902, under the direction of assistant librarian Miss Aurora Koehler In the receiving line were the Library Board members, consisting of Mrs. Louis Lager, president; Mrs. R. N Jewett, vice-president; M. H. Kelly, secretary; Mr Albert Young, treasurer and Dr George F Countryman, librarian. Aberdeen was very pleased with the new building.

At Mr Carnegie's request, the name had been changed to the Alexander Mitchell Library in honor of his friend who had been president of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. It was Mr. Mitchell who had named the city after his own birth-place, Aberdeen, Scotland.

When Miss Aurora Koehler resigned in 1914, her assistant, Mrs. Adele Drum, was appointed librarian. The circulation was beginning to rise. The 1914 record shows a total of 12,839 volumes loaned that year, with 4,066 of the total being children's books.

Mrs. Drum was librarian until 1924, when she resigned because of ill health. Under her supervision the circulation had grown, until the 1923 figures show 57,284 volumes loaned that year

When Miss Dorothea Heins, the first trained librarian, was appointed in January, 1924, she came to a thriving library already too small for the book collection of 13,599 volumes and 4,835 card holders. She expressed the need for more space, so that Aberdeen might have modern library service.

Miss Heins was especially concerned about the service to children, which she thought should be developed. The small

alcove allotted to the children was dismally inadequate for the many children now living in Aberdeen. She added more children's books to the collection, and invited the children into the library. Since then, the library has always belonged to the children of Aberdeen. The use of books by the children has grown more rapidly than use by the adults.

During the dust bowl years of the depression in the 1930's, the demand for library service was very great. Depression hit most people and business organizations adversely, but it boomed the library business. Aberdonians, with more leisure and less money, spent many hours at the library. In 1933, Aberdeen, with a population of 16,725, read 195,473 books.

Efforts were made by the Library Board and the Aberdeen Women's Club to secure better building facilities, but financial conditions in the city were such that their efforts were discouraged.

In June, 1944, Miss Heins died very suddenly, and her assistant, Miss Helen Glau, was appointed librarian. By this time the book collection had reached 32,655 volumes. It was almost impossible to find anything on the overcrowded shelves. The building was planned to house 10,000 volumes. It was decided to use the reading rooms for stack area until the end of the war when new quarters could be provided.

Serious discussion of ways and means to acquire funds for more space, was begun by the Library Board. In February, 1949, a group of citizens formed a "Friends of the Library" organization to aid the project. Mr. C. H. Creed was president of the group.

In spite of the earnest work by many interested citizens, the bond election held on October 25, 1949, failed by 80 votes to gain the required 60% majority.

On February 6, 1950, the library building was condemned as unsafe for public use by the city engineer. The great weight of the book collection of 38,421 volumes was causing the floor to collapse. The library was closed for two months. Finally a small collection of adult books was moved to the basement of the McDiarmid Slater Grocery. Limited services were again given. The children's books were loaned to the city schools. When school closed in the summer, the children were without book service. This school location was also unsatisfactory for the adults who used children's books, and for the children who did not attend public school.

As a partial solution for this problem a bookmobile was purchased. It was put into service in December, 1951. The first year it circulated 66,147 volumes. It has grown more popular each year. Its summer reading program is one of the outstanding events of the year for children.

Another bond election for a smaller amount was held on

September 11, 1951. It too failed. On April 15, 1952, an election to set up a sinking fund failed.

The Library Board spent much time trying to find new space for the library. In April, 1952, they rented the second floor of the Webb-Ackley building.

Library Board members, citizens and staff helped in the moving of the 43,000 books. Especially will be remembered the Junior class boys of the high school. They began the moving of books and periodicals one day when it was twenty below zero and cheerfully gave their free time for two months.

These rented quarters were only a partial solution for a growing library. So the city was again asked to vote funds for a building. On November 29, 1960, in the midst of a blizzard, Aberdeen citizens voted \$225,000 for a new library building. This amount, plus memorials and gifts, would mean a fine new building. Herges, Kirchgasser & Associates immediately began work on the plans for a building.

Mr. Abbott Milligan presented the site on 6th Avenue and Kline street in memory of his father, Mr. A. F. Milligan, a former Library Board president.

In July, 1963, the building was completed and the library again moved, and by August 1st the library was open for business. The building was designed and planned by Herges, Kirchgasser and Associates, A.I.A., Ray L. Roby, Consulting Engineer and constructed by the following contractors; Edwin A. Nordling, general contractor; Gagnon Plumbing and Heating Co., mechanical contractor and J. E. Tadlock and Sons, electrical contractor. That first month 17,341 books were loaned for home use, 576 new cards were issued and the air-conditioned reading rooms were in constant use. Since then the word for the Alexander Mitchell Library is "busy."

In 1964, the library has grown from that first collection of 100 donated books to a fine collection of 70,751 volumes. Periodicals, phonograph records, microfilm collections add to its usefulness.

During the 80 years since its founding, it has rolled up an impressive record of community service. It not only has loaned more than six million books for home use, but has supplied the answer to countless reference questions, and supplied information and inspiration to all who asked. Increasing emphasis on education for all citizens, on increasing leisure, on the growing number of senior citizens, all mean an increasing use of the public library of tomorrow. The library faces a bright future.

Helen Glau, Librarian
February 10, 1964

Alexander Mi



Opened for use August, 1963, with structure and equipment costing \$300,000. The street level and full basement have some 30,000 square feet of floor space. This fine fire proof building now houses a book collection of 70,751 volumes and was designed and planned to take care of another 70,000 volumes

McNeill Library



besides providing for many special services. A special children's area is located in the basement, and provision has been made to add an elevator at a later date so that the basement area will be more serviceable.

WHAT'S IN YOUR LIBRARY

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES

Adult Book Collection

A varied collection of 40,661 books of fiction and non-fiction to meet the needs of our growing community

Young Adult Book Collection

A collection of 4,356 books to inspire and stimulate the young reader. Planned as a bridge between the adult and children's collection.

Children's Room

Assembled in this bright, cheerful room is a book collection of 21,447 volumes for children from preschool age through the 6th grade.

Reference Collection

A special collection of 2,786 encyclopedias, indexes, yearbooks used to answer your questions. Telephone service for quick reference questions also come to this section.

South Dakota Collection

A reference collection of 1,501 books about South Dakota, Brown County and Aberdeen. Duplicate copies of the less rare books are filed next to this collection and may be borrowed. The library welcomes gifts to this collection.

Total Book Collection is now 70,751 volumes

Periodical Collection

A collection of periodicals dating back to 1900 are on file. 10 years of the file are on the upstairs shelves and the older files are in closed storage in the basement. Some 150 titles of the current titles are on display for use in the reading room.

Newspapers and Microfilm Reader

Nine current newspapers are on display for use in the reading room. The Aberdeen newspapers are on microfilm from 1884 to date. A microfilm reader is in the reference room for your use.

Book Projector

Books on film and a projector is provided by the Lion's Club. This may be borrowed by a reader who cannot hold a book.

Photocopying

Equipment is provided for copying a page from books and magazines.

Movie Projector

This equipment is provided for use in the meeting room.

Bibliographic Center For Research

An interlibrary loan service, which makes available a nationwide source of books of special or limited use. Available to all library users.

Record Collection

A loan collection of over 900 voice and music records for adult use.

Bookmobile Service

Two bookmobiles are scheduled at 10 stops each week in the city. With an annual circulation of 200,000 volumes each year, they serve some 5,000 children and adults.

Hospital Book Service

Bedside service to patients is provided with the aid of volunteers from the Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Grey Ladies.

Brown County Regional Library has quarters in the basement of the library and gives service by bookmobile to the residents of Brown County. By special contract the residents of Brown County may use all of the resources of the Alexander Mitchell Library including mail service. This library began as a state demonstration for the Library Services Act on July 7, 1959. On August 2, 1960, it was granted tax support and became the county library. The Board of Trustees consists of Mr. Don Young, chairman, Mrs. Preston Scott, Mrs. Cora Tunby, Mrs. Wallace McKiver, Mr. Clarence Smith. Mrs. Pearl Gemar is librarian, Miss Lois Connor and Mr. Homer Prather complete the staff. Circulation for 1960 was 43,221 volumes rising to 64,296 in 1963. It is hoped that other counties will plan to take advantage of the program and join Brown County in making this a regional library to serve the northeastern area of the state.

MEMBERS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ALEXANDER MITCHELL LIBRARY

Aberdeen is one of the few South Dakota libraries which has had a continuous existence. Certificate of corporate existence was signed by James H. Teller, Secretary of Dakota Territory, March 13, 1884. Ladies Auxiliary of the Public Library and Reading Room raised the money for support during period of 1883 to 1889 when new state law provided for appointment of library board members and City support.

Years of Service		Name	
1883	1889	J. H. Hauser, President,	1883 1889
1883	1889	J. H. Perry	
1883	1889	C. A. Ozias	

Years of Service		Name		
1883	1889	F Beard		
1883	1885	B. E. Hutchinson		
1890	1900	Mrs. J T Goodis, President, 1890	1892	
1885	1889	Mrs. Rodolphus Burgitt, President, 1892	1901	
1885	1889	Miss Mott		
1889	1890	Ezra A. Engle		
1889	1890	F H. Hagerty		
1890	1899	Miss Clara Wright		
1889	1900	Mrs. J H. Perry		
1890	1900	Dr Oswell Huestis		
1890	1900	Mrs. Charles Fisher, Past Secretary		
1890	1900	Mrs. Ira Barnes		
1893	1900	August Witte		
1893	1900	C. E. Reed		
1893	1900	S. H. Jumper		
1893	1900	Emma Cranmer		
1901	1905	Mrs. Louis Lager, President, 1901	1905	
1901	1905	Mrs. R. N Jewett		
1901	1905	M. H. Kelly, Past Secretary		
1901	1905	Albert Young		
1906	1912	John E. Adams, President, 1906—1912		
1906	1909	Charles A. Howard, Past Secretary		
1910	1912	Thomas J. Dent, Past Secretary		
1910	— 1913	Patrick Feely		
1912	1917	John W Hyslop, President, 1912	1913	
1901	1920	Dr. G. E. Countryman, President, 1913	1920	
1920	1935	A. F Milligan, President, 1920	1935	
1914	1941	J. E. Kelly, President, 1936	1941	
1915	1916	Mrs. R. A. Romans		
1915	1923	Mrs. C. N Herreid		
1917	1936	Mrs. C. N Harris, Past Secretary		
1917	1947	A. C. Witte, President, 1941	1944	
1923	1933	Miss Dorothy Rehfield		
1933	1951	Mrs. J H. McKeever, Past Secretary		
1937	1942	W J Allen		
1937	1946	Mrs. W J Hill, President, 1945	1946	
1942	1951	William Lamont		
1943	1951	Fred Roesch, President, 1947	1951	
1945	1946	F B. Stiles		
1946	1961	Miss Helen G. Strauss, Past Secretary		
1947	1961	Harold A. Fowler, President, 1951	1961	
1951	1962	Lester Johnson, President, 1961	1962	
1951	1954	Mrs. John Melin		
1951	1956	Al Zerr		
1954	1959	Mrs. Wayne DeVries		
1957	1960	S. A. Heinzman		
1960	1961	Mrs. Eldon Ray		
1960	1961	Mrs. Robert Rank		
1961		George J Rice, President, 1962	1963	
1962		Francis Rinke, President, 1963		
1962		Mrs. Kenneth Ulland, Secretary		
1962		Mr. Herman Pickus		
1962		Mrs. Frank Kraft		



MISS HELEN GLAU

— Head Librarian

Alexander Mitchell's capable administrator received her B. S. Degree in Education from Northern State College, and was graduated from the University of Minnesota Library School with a B. S. in Library Science, equivalent to what is now the M. S. in that field.

After college Miss Glau returned to her hometown of Aberdeen and accepted her first job, working at first part time and soon full time as assistant to Miss Dorothea Heins. In 1944 she became the Head Librarian. During her administration the Library has been moved three times, the book collection has doubled, circulation has tripled, and two Bookmobiles have been put into use.

Among Miss Glau's achievements are the starting of a Young Adults' book collection and a widely

varied record collection, an extensive addition to the South Dakota collection, and the beginning of the popular summer reading program for children.

Miss Glau is a Past President of the South Dakota Library Association and also a member of the A.A.U.W., American Library Association, Zonta Club, Business and Professional Women's Club and Mountain Plains Library Association.

MRS. HOWARD PURDY

Mrs. Purdy, Assistant Librarian and Reference Librarian, has been working full time for the Library since 1943. She received her A. B. Degree from Yankton College.

LIBRARY ASSISTANTS

Mrs. Mary Obermeyer and Mrs. Hazel Roth, both Library Assistants attended Northern State College.

BOOKMOBILE LIBRARIANS

The Bookmobile Librarians, all working full time, are Mrs. Edna Heintzen, Northern State College; Mrs. Leona Blando, Mrs. Lillie Rowse, Valley City Teachers College; and Mrs. Laura Holty, Northern State College.

PART—TIME HELPERS

Part Time library helpers are Mrs. Stella Schilberg, Children's Librarian, Anadarko College; Mrs. Edith Luce, B.A., Jamestown College; Mrs. Hulda Fletcher; and the Misses Isabel Luke, Patricia Lapka, Barbara Zumm, Donna Schilberg, Mary Mathern, Gail Dewar, and Peggy Van De Rostyne.

CUSTODIAN

The full-time custodian is Mr. Lyman Cotton, Huron College.

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

Thru the years many individuals have made gifts to the library. These gifts have added historical, as well as monetary, value to the library

- Mr. Andrew Carnegie donated \$15,000 for the first library building.
- Mr. C. H. Pryor gave the first library site on Sixth Avenue and Lincoln street.
- Mr. J. L. Browne gave an additional piece of land between the library and the Methodist Church.
- Mrs. A. H. Olwin gave \$1,000.
- Mrs. J. L. Browne gave her home on North Main which was sold for \$9,350, a bust of Joan of Arc and a painting by Frank Ashford.
- Dorothea Heins Memorial \$199.
- H. S. Cronyn quarter section of land south of the city.
- Miss Cora LaScelle gave \$9,000.
- Mr. and Mrs. J. H. McKeever Dakota Territorial map collection and a bust of Beethoven
- Aberdeen Federation of Women's Clubs \$415.
- Aberdeen Branch of the Association of Childhood Education \$100
- Festival of Nations \$225.
- League of Women Voters memorial for Mr. A. D. Zemlicka \$5.
- Mr. A. D. Zemlicka memorial.
- Mr. Frank G. Suttle memorial \$210.
- Current Events Club \$50.
- Shakespeare Club memorial to Miss Dorothea Heins 2 framed manuscript pages
- Zonta Club 2 benches for the lobby.
- Mr. Hugh Agor 7 pictures by Frank Ashford and 1 A. Lincoln ambrotype
- Mr. Herman Pickus \$285.
- Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Forbes framing of the pictures.
- Aberdeen Garden Club and Audubon Wildlife films \$100.
- Book collection in honor of Mr. Sam Salinsky \$100 anonymous donor.
- Herges, Kirchgassler & Associates table and 4 chairs.
- Aberdeen Woman's Club picture painted by Frances Cranmer Greenman
- Mrs. A. L. Davies picture
- Aberdeen Firemen & Dakota Sash & Door Co. 12 stools.
- Mrs. F. G. Petrie flag.
- Triangle School Service South Dakota State flag.
- Ladies of the Moose a book each year.
- Readers Round Table a book each year
- Anonymous donors \$1,000; \$10; and \$165.
- Memorial book collection
- Sertoma Club picture.
- Adams THIRD GRADE \$1.00.
- Francis T. Rinke Refrigerator and Coffee Maker.

On January 15, 1960, Mr. Abbott Milligan presented the present library site on South Kline Street and Sixth Avenue in memory of his father, Mr. A. F. Milligan, who served as a library trustee, 1920 1935.

"The world of books is the most remarkable creation of man. Nothing else that he builds ever lasts. Monuments fall. Nations perish. Civilizations grow and die out; and after an era of darkness new races build others. But in the world of books are volumes that have seen this happen again and again and yet live on, still young; still as fresh as the day they were written; still telling men's hearts of men centuries dead."

— — — Clarence Day — — —