

### May 9, 1885 A NEW LIBRARY PROPOSED

Proposed by Clayton Publishing Co., of Chicago of at least 100 volumes — need 50 subscribers. Business men endorsed the idea — trust enough subscribers will subscribe.

1885 Library Society elected J. C. Kleist President, W. A. Patter Vice-President, D. T. Janes Secretary, Henry Rollman Treasurer, Miss Crawford Librarian.

### CHILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, by Mary Knauf

The first lending library in Chilton was started in 1915 by Ella Groetzinger, and housed in the D.V. Jones Telephone and Candy Store next to the State Bank on Main Street. Members of the Woman's Club who donated books and support to Ella Groetzinger were Mrs. John McMullen, Corinne McMullen, Jenny Schlicting, Mrs. William Schaefer, Jane and Eliza Gallet, Gladys Connell Westphal, Mrs. Lloyd, Mrs. Charles Groetzinger, Mrs. George Hume, Sr. and Nettie Connell. Other benefactors were Valentine and Henry Rothchild, brothers of Ella Groetzinger, Tom Connell, Cap Fox, William Knauf and Jack Hall.

In October 1932, spurred on by Ella Groetzinger, the Chilton Woman's Club in conjunction with the State Library Association, began investigating the possibility of a State recognized Public Library for Chilton. William Knauf offered the Woman's Club a part of the second floor of the Knauf and Tesch Store and in January, 1933, Ella Groetzinger, Irma Imm, and Ellen Goode Reif, President of the Woman's Club formally opened the Chilton Public Library. Later when the K.T. Store was sold to Johnson Hill, J. P. Hanley graciously permitted the library to remain on the second floor of the store. The State Library Association gave one hundred books and another three hundred on loan. All other books were donated by Henry Rothchild, Senator Robert M. LaFollett, Jr. William Knauf, Pharmacist A.S. Hipke, Mr. and Mrs. William Baier, Rev. H.M. Keyes, Nettie and Tom Connell and Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Morrissey.

The first members of the Chilton Library Board were President Ella Groetzinger, William Knauf, High School Principal, G. M. Morrissey, Mary McHale and Judge George M. Goggins.

In 1936, the Common Council voted to move the Library into the City Hall in a room vacated by the old high school. Ed Landgraf, a skilled cabinet maker made the tables and chairs with lumber donated by the Woman's Club and additional tables were purchased by the Club as needed.

That same year, Mrs. Walter Kurtz was engaged to do book repair for the public library through a WPA project and in six months repaired 800 of the library's 1700 volumes. Rev. Henning and G. M. Morrissey were instrumental in securing the first money budgeted by the Common Council for the library. During the early years Ella Groetzinger, Ruby Schaefer, and Frieda Landgraf received only token remuneration for their years of service in the Library and all support and book donations came from interested members of the community and the Chilton Woman's Club. Through the years the following persons were Head Librarians and Library Board Presidents.

#### Head Librarians

Ella Groetzinger 1933-37, Ruby Schaefer 1937-53  
Ernestine Steger 1953-60, Mary Thompson 1961-62  
Bernice Hofmeister 1962-68, Ruth Peterson 1968-70  
Evelyn Casper 1970-

#### Library Board Presidents

Ella Groetzinger 1933-39, Laura Stauss 1939-44  
Bernice Tesch 1944-46, Della Jensen 1946-53  
Carl Hofmeister 1953-54, Frieda Landgraf 1954-56  
John Freiberger 1956-64, Mary A. Knauf 1964-

The library building fund received a bequest of \$100,000 from the estate of Gordon Wolff in late 1975 giving impetus to proceeding with definite plans for the building of a municipal library. The location on Park Street on the river bank near Main Street has been chosen, designs by R. E. Mirsch approved and construction is to begin during 1977, our Centennial Year.



Knauf & Tesch Dry Goods in 1905 on East Main Street. Site now used by Chilton Shopping Center Furniture Mart.