

CHAPTER II

THE BEQUEST FOR A COUNTY LIBRARY *

IN 1891 Mrs. Georgia C. Glenn and Mrs. Fannie Strandler solicited aid for a "Reading-Room" for the city of Van Wert. Some days later, at the home of the latter, these two ladies, with ten others, organized a reading-room association, each agreeing to pay three dollars annually for its support. Mrs. George H. Marsh donated the first fifty dollars. Moreover, the income from entertainments, lectures, socials, etc., increased the fund materially.

On July 28, 1893, the association was incorporated under the laws of Ohio, under the name "The Van Wert Library Association." The following were the original members of the organization: Georgia C. Glenn, Lucy A. Craig, Mary P. Leeson, Isabella L. Rose, L. Elizabeth Malick, Clara V. Halfhill, Frances O. Clark, Eudorah H. Troup, Anna W. Clark, Hattie L. Brotherton, Fannie H. Strandler, Mary J. Hiestand.

On July 25, 1894, they decided to open a public circulating library, although they had only \$600 in the treasury. This fund, however, was increased by the sale of annual tickets at one dollar and a half each, and donations of books, furniture and other things needful for the fitting out of a reading-room were generously made by the people. A pleasant room in the Kime block was secured and the library, containing 600 volumes, was opened to the public September 14, 1894, with Mrs. Clara Halfhill [Cavette] in charge as librarian.

The ladies continued to work and received a great deal of encouragement. Better still, contributions came from many sources. Among others, Mr. J. S. Brumback manifested much interest in this library, buying tickets for distribution and giving liberally to its support. He remarked to one of the

* In the remainder of Part I the public press is for the most part allowed to tell the story. This is done for the purpose of showing public sentiment relative to the county library idea. While much is given because of its local interest, the part as a whole might also prove attractive to the general reader. To avoid repetitions many omissions have been made from the articles, which are given chronologically.