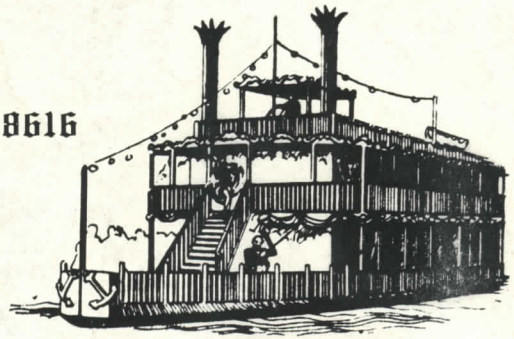


Chesaning Public Library

227 East Broad Street Chesaning, Michigan 48616

Phone 845-3211



I have been asked to participate in the Chesaning Public Library Oral History Project. I have agreed to a tape recording between a library representative and myself. I take this opportunity to assure you that these recordings are the property of the library and its historical collection, for use as the library sees fit, and I agree that no monetary consideration need be paid me.

B. Ruth Morse

Witness:

Walter J. Frank

Week of April 19, '78

Ruth, your mother told us a great deal about the history of Chesaning and the beginning of the library. We would like to have you tell us a little more about our Chesaning Public Library.

Well, I think we should begin with the new library itself, some facts about it, in case for posterity something ever happens to it or we ever move out of it. The Village donated property for this new library on the corner of Canal and Broad Streets, which is right across on the east side of the bridge on the southeast corner of Cole Park. The Peet Family provided the money for the building. The contractor was Ray Wilson, Inc. who was a builder in town at that time, and the Committee chose him for contractor. The building is ninety feet wide facing Broad Street and forty feet deep, made of brick vaneer on the front and cement block. It was at first divided into two parts. The east sixty-four feet is where the library was housed and the west twenty-six feet, the Council room.

Ruth, I'd like to interrupt you here, Wasn't there a stipulation made as to the ^{use of the} Council room by the Peet Family when they made this library? I understood that the Council asked that the library be made this much larger and Peets agreed to it with the understanding that if the library ever needed the extra space the library should have preference of it. Do you remember that?

I can't remember that, Helen, no. That sounds logical, and it may be that they built it that much larger for that purpose, and of course eventually it was all used by the library. At the time they didn't need that much room. I think

I think that records will show that Peets never intended to put the extra - was it 26 feet - they never intended to put the Council on it. They only intended the smaller type library, but that the Council asked for that extra space.

I don't remember, Helen. Could be. I'd hate to put that down as ^{really} correct because I don't recall. It's surprising how many things you can forget in that length of time.

Yes that's true.

~~The room~~ Back of the council room (what was used then as the council room) was a storage vault - quite a large one - which was used for storing papers from the library and books which they didn't want to keep out and also the Village papers were stored in there too. There were two rest rooms in the building, one on the Council room side and one off of the workshop - or work room - back of the library proper.

Now the Committees, I think we should make note of the Committees at that time. This was planned late in 1955, in fact I think it was in July that the Peet Family offered the library, and in the fall, either October or November and I can't remember which month, they were moved in. They chose a day when the Rotary Club met at the Community Center and after their meeting the Rotary Club members helped us move into the library, move the books in, so that by that night we had all of our books into the new part, in boxes and on the floor, but still all in.

Where did you move from?

From the Community Center, Peet Community Center. Now, this was the building and planning Committee for the Library. I don't recall how it was appointed, but it came about, it was a nucleus of people interested.

Douglas Peet and Bill Morse from the Chamber of Commerce were co-chairmen. Dr. Floyd Burlingame was a representative of the Village. Jay Lerner, who I believe was Township Supervisor at the time was also on the Committee; Rev. Alan Gray and Bernece Peet from the Library Board of Trustees. Now they had another Committee appointed which they called the Interior Library Planning Committee, This other one was just the structure itself, but there

was a lot to do after the building was put up to get it ready to move in and use as a library. These were the members of that Committee: Mabell Babion, Floy Robinette (who was Librarian at that time), Kareen Vrable, Ruth Morse, Adeline Parshall and Berniece Peet. Every one of the people on this Library had been working for years and years in the interest of the library, and it was with a lot of excitement that we planned for moving in!

Now, I should say a little bit about the furnishings of the library at that time. We were able to purchase Woodard furniture at almost cost, through Phil Grebel who lived here in Chesaning at that time and worked for Woodard's, so we had some real nice furniture to begin with. Our draperies were quite outstanding, black and white in a large pattern which made the place real cheerful and modern to fit in with the furniture; and the drapery material was purchased from Woodards and Eleanor Beebe who lived here at that time made the drapes for us for no charge at all. It was surprising how much volunteer work has gone into the making of our Library here, thousands and thousands of hours and probably thousands and thousands of dollars that it would be impossible to even mention at all.

At that time when we moved in, I should say too, we had room to spare. We couldn't begin to fill the shelves that we had had made for that library. We were so thrilled! We thought, "Well, surely this will do us for many, many years. We can have all the books we want." It's hard to realize that now we're so cramped for space and just don't know where to turn to next.

Now the dedication didn't occur until May of the following year, 1956. It was set up for a Sunday afternoon so that people from all over the State could attend and invitations had gone out to libraries all over, Librarians and people interested in it, to the State Library, and we had a good attendance from all over.

What actual year is that now?

That's 1956. I looked up the date. The date wasn't in the paper, but my mother had the date down, actual date of the dedication, which was May 20th. Now Reverend Alan Grey, who was on the Board of Trustees at that time - might have been Chairman, I don't recall - was master of ceremonies for the program. We had a little program and Mrs. Loleta Fyan, who was State Librarian at that time gave the real official speech for the program. We had local officials attending and to finish the program off, Douglas Peet presented the deed to the Library to Harold Schultz, the Village President, so that actually the Village owns the Building of the Library and the land on which it is built. Also we had at that time a flag presented to us as part of the program by our American Legion Post here in Chesaning, and I can't recall just who presented the flag at that time. Afterwards people could look the building over and we had coffee and tea and cookies and a nice visit. We all felt that it was pretty well attended and something that we would all.... I think pictures were taken at that time too and put in the paper.

Now, Floy Robinette was Librarian at the time we moved and she had her hands full with volunteer help - most of the volunteer help were people from the Study Club and the Board of Trustees - to get the books on the shelves and arranged. At that time we did not have the Dewey Decimal System, but we arranged the fiction according to authors as we do now and I presume our Reference library was very small compared to what it is at the present time.

I think this would be a good place to say a little bit about the Library System which has evolved since we moved into that new building. In fact, not too many years later, in November of 1960 which would be four years later, our library, along with many, many smaller libraries were having a dreadful time to stay above board financially, even to keep open and

pay our librarian and ^{to} buy books. We just did not have very much money. That year of 1960, ^{late} in the fall, Mr. Tanner, who was director of the Public Library System in Saginaw, notified us that we would be eligible for part of getting some Federal money into this county if we would set up a system ~~with~~ contracts between the smaller libraries and Saginaw Public Libraries. Now, he had applied for the grant but it was up to us to sort of coordinate it. I guess we had to qualify according to certain things to receive this money and get some good of it. There was only \$3000. in cash, which didn't leave any actual money to spend hardly, except for the expenses of getting back and forth and perhaps I guess ^{some} staff expense. There were \$24,000. worth of books shipped into the Saginaw Public Library as the central location for Book Pool. Now this meant that the libraries which took part in this which at the time were Merrill, St. Charles and Chesaning, would have access to this Book Pool and could have on their shelves a share of it at all times of the year. The books were changed every so many months so that we would have a chance at all the books in the Book Pool. Well, we immediately jumped at the chance to have the advantage of more books. We paid a certain ~~percent~~ capita tax which I don't recall (it was very little), It meant a lot to us.

I think it was ten cents.

Per capita?

Would that be too high?

Yes, I think that's too high, Helen. It was very little, but we scrounged. We got that money because it gave us such a teffific advantage. Besides that, we had help from the Saginaw Public Libraries in many other ways you know. They'd answer our questions -- we worked as a unit you might say. We called it the Saginaw County Library System.

As I remember, ^(at) that time, your library card was good in any of these libraries and their cards were good in ours.

At the time the Book Pool was set up we could reciprocate with any library that was in it, which was Merrill, St. Charles and Chesaning and there was no difference, we could use them.

⑦ Saginaw?

Not at that time, no. Well, very shortly ^{before the end} -- now it was spring of sixty-one before we actually got going because we had to have some meetings -- many boards of trustees from these libraries were afraid they'd lose their autonomy in going into it, and it took some real work to finally come out with cooperation of every library. Freeland shortly joined after that because they had no library; they had a very small library, and I don't remember just when they came in. Hemlock did not come in with us at once. I believe they came in the second year; they could see the advantages, because this did work after one year of experiencing the advantages of all working together. It showed up when we evaluated it at the end of the year. Now we had to have contracts with the Saginaw Public Library for this. Dorothy Fell (do you remember her?) ~~she~~ was a librarian in the Saginaw Public Libraries, and Mr. Tanner assigned her to take charge of this system and she organized us, you might say. She even came to Chesaning and helped us (I forget the term they use for weeding out the old books, there is a librarian's term for that). We didn't know how to do it; we couldn't judge what should be on our shelves and what shouldn't be. She came down and did the entire library herself. It was quite surprising you know, ^{way} she could help us.

The second year, this system received \$6,950. and 10,000 more books for the Pool, and this really sort of -- well they had to be out in the libraries. The Saginaw Public Library didn't have room for all those books, so we had to keep them in circulation. Of course that was the purpose of it anyway. So that in turn made it necessary for us to build some new shelving, which

we could do, we had plenty of room at that time to put it in. Now as I say, by that time Hemlock was in with us. I think they came in the second year.

Now, the third year was the year that the Saginaw Public Libraries offered the use of their library to any cardholder in the entire County. So that was a great advantage to us. The cost of a card at Saginaw Public Libraries for anyone not living in the city was \$10.00 per person and this was really quite a thing for those people in the outlying townships who did use the Saginaw Public Library. It was a saving and it also stimulated use of the library. Now this was in 1964. This took us through to that time. I might add that this Federal grant which was to run for three years, and ended in 1964 was given to us for the purpose of stimulating systems whereby we could maintain ourselves, and it certainly did that very purpose because by that time nobody was going to give up the library service which had been worked out up until that time. I think that was the year that it was decided through a court case (I think in ~~was~~ Belding, Michigan) that libraries should be receiving Penal Fine money according to law. For years all the Penal Fine money had gone to law libraries in the counties, and this particular year there was this decision made, and I think there was a bill passed in Legislature at Lansing that a system of county libraries be set up where there were none. Well Saginaw County did not have a county library board and we couldn't set up a county library without, at that time, the Board of Supervisors it was called, without their help and without their consent and I believe without the vote of the people. However, the County Library Board was appointed by the Commissioners and I think they had one from each part of the county so that it was pretty well represented. I know I represented Chesaning Township Library and the other libraries were represented as well. Even Frankenmuth, and they weren't in our system at all, because they were independent and they hadn't gone in with the county system.

Now due to this change in receiving penal fines, ^(money) we had to make contracts. Each small library, and this applied to Chesaning as well, we had to have contracts with the township boards of each township that we served which meant that we went to each township board. Now this took, Helen you went with me a good many times.....

Yes I did.

....and went to board meetings and we visited officials from the township boards and talked with them and eventually we did have contracts with Brady, Albee, (what's the township out by...?)

Chapin?

Chapin...yes.

But not Maple Grove.

No, no we couldn't sign a contract with Maple Grove. That is, they didn't want to be included in it. And of course Chesaning Township was included in this, but we have contracts with them that they would turn their penal fine money over to the Chesaning Public Library and they in turn would receive our services. Now for this first year that it was begun we only got their penal fine money. We didn't get any extra money. We were supposed to work up to 3/10 of a mil from each township, that was in order to receive State Aid which was one of the qualifications at that time. It was quite a thing, I don't recall that first year how much penal fine money Chesaning Library got, Maple Grove was included in with us, but the County Library Board had to make a contract with their Board to take their penal fine ^{money} to give to Chesaning Library. That's the way we got around it. ^{so} Maple Grove did get service, but we only got their penal fine money. We never got anything more from them.

They would not sign a contract with Chesaning.....

They would not sign a contract with Chesaning, but they signed a contract with the County Board so that was eventually worked out in that way. Now as the years progressed and the State qualifications for State Aid became a little greater each year, we had to go out and get extra money from these townships in order to bring it up to 3/10 mil from each township because penal fine money didn't amount to that much. Well, all the townships pretty well took care of that for us except Maple Grove. We never did get any more from them.

Now we were still... we thought we were on a third of a mil, it had been so long since we had voted that millage from the township (I can't recall when the early years when we did that; it must have been in the 1940's sometime, early 1940's.

That would be in your mother's report, I think

Yes, I'm sure it is. She perhaps told the date of that. We found out later it was just a quarter of a mil. It was .025 mils that we were getting, and we realized that we just had to get more money. So by 1970, which was six years later after we started receiving the penal fine monies, it was judged that it would be a good time to put it on the ballot in Chesaning Township to ask for a complete 1 mil, which would maintain the library.

Previous to that time you know Helen, we had closed down on hours. We didn't qualify for State Aid one year. ^{because} We weren't open enough hours, we didn't buy enough books, we didn't serve the people, the people who were coming in didn't pay us enough money you know to qualify us. We were in a really bad way at that time, and I'm sure we cut off service to some of the townships because I saw a letter the other day that had been sent out from the Library Board of Trustees notifying the townships that they'd have to pay a fee of I think \$2.50 for a library card if they wanted to continue. I don't recall that year, but it must have been shortly before 1970.

You see, somewhere in here (Now I don't know just what the years were that I was on the Board).....

Well you were on the Board when we went into the System, you had just newly come on. I remember that, when we started the Saginaw County System, which would be in 1960. You might have gone on that year.

Well, I don't think so, because we moved back in 1960. It must have been 1961, at least.

Oh, maybe sixty one then.

And I was on ten years. Well, somewhere in there the Council moved out of the library because the library needed the space, and when the Council moved out of the library they cut off the telephone and the library had many more expenses than they'd ever had before.

That's right.

They had to take care of everything, completely. While the Council was in the Library, the library did not have to take care of the lights or the furnace or the telephone, but the Council left in a little bit of a huff so they immediately put all of that onto the Library Board which made a great deal more expense and I remember that along in that time was the time when they called in Consumers and Consumers told them that one they'd cut down would be to change their lighting. So they took out all the old lights and put in the new type fluorescent lights in order to save money. That was one reason why they were so short of money.

That's very true. Now this took place in 1966, and it was really brought about by the settling of the building the previous year. All of a sudden, well it was gradual, but suddenly it became crucial let's say, the building settled so that you could actually feel a downward slope to the floor and great cracks appeared in the northwest corner of the building. In fact, I

think it rained in through some. I remember seeing pictures of the girls drying out materials from the vault which got wet. It was really quite serious, and the Village talked about it in 1965 in the fall. It was discussed at their meetings what they would do, but they didn't take any action until 1966, when the Peet family offered to pay for the repairs which had to be done and the Village Council moved out that year and gave us the extra... The building was repaired. What they did I don't recall, probably the record is someplace at the library - jacked up and the cracks filled. I believe it was newly painted inside and refurbished as far as the foundation was concerned. What had caused it was the settling of the ground. Apparently before the library was built no testing was done as to the soil underneath. The Village Council moved out that year and Peets reimbursed the Village for the cost of the repair work and it was turned completely over to the library. In fact there's a picture at the library showing them going into the new building. It seemed awfully bare then. Yes, ~~it~~ it was four years later that we put this to a vote. Each year something crucial would come up in the community and we didn't think it was a good time to ask for a whole mil for the library, but our services were so cut down and our expenses were so great that it had to be then or we'd practically fold up. There isn't any use of having a library if it can't give you service.

But it did pass, didn't it?

It passed, and the people of the community showed... it passed with a goodly amount of votes so it showed that the people of this community did want their library service and appreciated it.

This brings us to the present time. Now in 1970 when this was voted on, I think the amount that was asked in tax money was 18,000 dollars, which gave the Board of Trustees something more to work on and they could make out a decent budget. The penal fines were getting smaller and smaller each year so that they couldn't depend on them any more, but they had a sizeable amount now that they knew definitely would be coming in from taxes so they could go ahead and restore the services which they had been providing for this community. Now in order to receive State Aid, which is so much per capita, it used to be a minimal amount - sometimes it wouldn't even be a hundred dollars - now it is up to something like... or maybe in 1970 it was about 5¢ per capita. But of course we were serving something like 10,000 people at that time because they included all the townships with whom we had made a contract. Now there are other qualifications for receiving State Aid as well. We were classed as a certain class library (I think we were II) but I know (SIDE 2) There are several other qualifications for receiving State Aid besides the millage that the library receives. Libraries go according to class, and the class is pretty much decided upon by the State according to population served. I think Chesaning Public Library has been class II. Whether it still is or not or whether it has been changed, I don't know, but in 1970 according to population I believe it was class II and in 1980 it's just possible that we go into another classification which would require more stringent things to qualify. The population served, the hours open to the public - they demand so many hours a week open to the public - it's up to the discretion of the Library Board and the librarians what hours they choose to remain open; Certification of the Staff as to their qualifications in serving the public in this respect is important also and the State demands certain educational qualifications in that way; size of the book inventory is important. You have to have so many books if you're serving so many people. Now the Village of Chesaning does maintain some support in this way, and it helps.... I think they pay for part of the utilities now. I'm not sure just what that is but they do give us some support, and of course they own the building and the land. The Library does get some fine money, but that varies from month to month and year to year so there's no telling - you can't depend on that, and there are some people who give gifts to the library of money.

Ruth, the Village owns the library and the land...

They have the deed...

But isn't that a qualified ownership? Wasn't it given to the Village only for the use of the library?

Oh yes, yes that's true, but we don't have taxes or anything like that to pay on it. Now this money, I think I've run through pretty much all our ways of financing. This money is administered by a Board of Trustees which is chosen from the community that it serves. The Board of Trustees used to be appointed by the Township Board. It could be elected, but it could also be appointed and for many years that's the way the business was conducted. Usually they were people ~~who~~ were avid readers or very interested in the progress of the library ~~who~~ were chosen to be on the Board and they were appointed by the Township Board. The years that they served were six, I don't believe, and their terms were staggered so that there ^{we've} only two new members at a time to come on the Board. At the present time the Library Board is chosen by the people, because we vote upon them, and I think that's gone on for - what is it, ~~one year~~ Helen? two years.

I don't know, but the State passed a law that these people had to be elected.

Yes, and I don't know whether we still have six or whether there are more on the Board, I'm not sure. They elect their own Chairman and Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and they administer the finances of the library, ~~at~~ set up the budget, work with the librarian as to what they need and in fact...

Pay the bills....

Yes and pay the bills.

Now as far as staff is concerned, we have a Librarian who at the present time is Dorothy Adams. Dorothy came into the Library in 1961. I had to stop and think back. That was the time that Floy Robinette left us, and it was ^{at} the beginning of the System, and that was ~~getting to be~~ such a big business you might say compared to what we had been into that Floy felt that she had served her length of time as Librarian. She had been on for 13 years at that time, and Dorothy Adams applied for the position and she was accepted. I think Dorrie Hendershott at that time also applied and she was Assistant Librarian, but she has since moved to Flint and to my ^{latest} knowledge still works in the Library in Flint. Our Assistant Librarian at the present time is Elaine Amman, and I think Elaine has been with us for about eight years. We also have two others, Shirley Sovis and Donna Ketchum working. I can't remember what they call them, and we have a page who is Patricia Mahoney. Now Donna has worked off and on in the Library for many, many years. I didn't realize it until I talked with her the other day, and I started to figure up. She had worked at the Library in the forties; she had worked in the fifties. However, she wasn't working in the library at the time we moved; and then in the seventies she came back to work and is still working. I said to her, "I guess you once get the library work in your blood and it's there, isn't it?" and she said, "Yes, I guess so."

We also have a great deal of volunteer work done in the library. Right now I can't tell what it is, but I can well remember what the volunteer work used to be years ago. It was dusting and shelving and cleaning. I can remember even going over before we had a regular cleaning woman, Helen, as a Trustee Board member and cleaning the bathroom and the workroom and things like that. I had to laugh, I had forgotten all about those things. Now we have a regular cleaning lady.

Now in order to qualify for State Aid, the staff is required to keep up their certification as having ^{sometimes} library experience, and they can do this through correspondence courses, ~~those~~ are available to them. I think Dorothy has qualified herself fairly recently by having a week's work experience at the Saginaw Public Libraries, and also there are various workshops, probably at least one a year to keep the staff of small libraries up

in their certification. That's quite important not only for receiving State Aid which it primarily started for, but to keep people who are work- in libraries updated on changes on all the various things that go on in the Library.

I think it's important that we record for future history just what the services are in our own library, because we have many which other small community libraries do not have. We serve the same townships as when our System began. We have of course, besides our books, several newspapers, and many periodicals - I wouldn't begin to say the number, probably around forty- maybe more than that by this time.

That was another State situation where, I forget the exact, I don't remember the date, and I forget the complete fact of it, but at one time the libraries were given an enormous number of periodicals for a certain length of time.

That was through a Federal grant, I can't tell the year either, but it was in the seventies, I'm sure.

Yes, and then after a certain length of time the library was left to choose the ones they could afford and the ones they wanted. A lot of people criticize these acts by the Federal government, and on the surface they do seem to be odd, but it is for the purpose of educating and giving the people the chance to realize what they really want and then take over themselves.

That's very true, and we have found from experience here that you once give a service to the public, they don't want to lose that service. So that is the purpose of the Federal grant.

So they will exert themselves then to keep it.

Yes, to maintain it themselves. We also have a large record library which is loaned out, or there is a record player in the library where you can go and listen to them. We are unique, I think, for our sized library, in having a lot of genealogical material on the families in this community. We have in our files of genealogy a lot of the past history of the community, and we also have a regular file card index system of family history of various families. Now this was compiled many years ago by Col. Mark Ireland. He spent years acquiring dates and facts about families and it's really a beautiful file system. This has recently refiled and sort of brought up to date by Ford Harris. I think he spent almost a year in filing odds and ends of material, so that if a person wanted to look up something about the past history of Chesaning or the community around us, they could find it more easily.

We have an excellent reference system. Of course we now have the Dewey Decimal system, and our reference system is large and is used a lot. We have a separately marked-off reading place for students or anyone who wants to use that reference section.

I didn't realize what an exceptional Vertical File we maintain in our library. It was brought to our attention one year when Bea Adams was here for the summer. Now Bea is a librarian and she was at the time in college. She offered (or else her mother talked her into) taking care of the material we had for our Vertical File and getting it in order. She said, "Truly it was remarkable the material we had amassed.", and I'm sure it's much better at this time because the librarians keep adding to it.

We also have a little for storing and listening to cassettes, and we have all kinds of cassettes; those which would appeal to young people and older people and some that are educational. We have recently acquired a copying machine which is valuable to a great many patrons. I use it a lot myself, and I know other people who use it a lot. Now this was recently acquired, I can't just tell the year, within three or four years.

Well, we've had it about five years, I would think.

It came from Revenue Sharing system, which the Township received and they furnished the money for buying that. Another thing that we're real happy

about is the fact that we have a reader-printer for use with our microfilm. Now the cost of microfilming and also the money to buy the reader-printer came from the Friends of the Library. This ^{used} a great deal - it's new and I foresee that in the future it's going to be used a great deal more.

Now there are many other things which our library either sponsors or does and I think we should try to enumerate ~~some of~~ them. We've had a column in the paper since I don't know when, I can't even remember how far back it goes. The papers have been very cooperative about publishing ^{anything that} the library needed, and we have ^{since} set up this column.

You mean Library Lines?

It is now called Library Lines, and it has been called that since Dorothy Adams in 1961 came on. Before that I think it was just Library News or something like that, but since then it has been Library Lines, so it's possible that she started that. It's been written by a great many different people, and it's always very interesting. Our paper is weekly so it's a nice way to keep the public informed as to what's going on in the Library and what new books we have.

The Library serves as a polling place for Chesaning Township Precinct Number Three, which is the precinct on the other (east) side of the River, or part of the other side of the River.

The Library stores, it owns, this was given to the Library, a filmstrip of Chesaning History which covers the period from 1841 to 1964, and there's a sound tape with it I believe. I don't know if it's all on one tape or not, but it was compiled by Ivan Kurrle and Wayne Lawton. It's a documentary of all the important facets of the community, and was first shown at the Rotary Club. It was sponsored by the Rotary Club, and a projector was purchased for use with it and it was given to the Library in 1966 by our Chesaning Rotary Club and that is loaned out to organizations ^{or to} people who are interested in showing it.

I should make note here too that in the late fifties (now this is going back, but it occurred to me that at one time in that decade) we received a complete library from the Poag family who lived in Burt. It was offered to us and we accepted it, not knowing what we were getting. We took station wagons and cars and went over and I think it took us two trips to bring all the books back, I believe they were packed in boxes, and we brought them back, and it took us months to sort those out and find what we could use. We were really very thrilled about it. It gave a lot of stimulus to our librarians and people working, trustees and everyone, because it added books that we never dreamed of having to our library. It also had technical books which we sold to Delta College for, oh dear, what did they pay? almost three hundred dollars I think, and some of those books of course we could not use. You always in every group find some books... if they were duplicates we gave them to another library, ^{them} who didn't have them, if they were not and we couldn't use them we sold ⁱⁿ a book sale. So every one of those books were taken care of. Dorothy Fell was with us at the time, and she helped sort and decide what we should do with them. That was quite an outstanding thing to happen to our Library.

Now the Library has also had a story hour sponsored, Helen you started that Story Hour didn't you?

Yes, I think it was about 1948, the summer of '48. It was in the summer time when there was no school. The Story Hour they have now is for pre-schoolers, but this was for any children that wanted to come in and it was held in the Community Center, once a week as I remember. It was a long time ago.

It's a long time ago, and we may have skipped a few years, but it's still maintained as you say, as a preschool hour. But in the summer time they do have a reading program for young children, which takes in the children

Chesaning Public Library

of school age. Sometimes they have a contest, I don't know just how they do organize that, but it stimulates the children's interest in the library.

Well I think they have different things at different times, different years they have different things.

Yes. The Library has always celebrated National ^{Library} ~~Book~~ Week and National Children's Book Week. One is in the fall and one is in the spring and they have always done something about that, either had a poster contest or a reading contest or an essay contest of some kind.

Another thing the Library has done for a number of years is to encourage school children to come in in classes. Actually the teachers are encouraged to bring their children in as a class, where they supervise them in checking out books. They in that way learn how to use the library and also what is available to them. This has been a program which has been very successful and used a great deal. Children are bussed in from the schools.

The Library has, ~~been~~, from the very first, been a meeting place for study groups, cultural events, anything that is pertinent to the Library and that would be, anything that would be able to be held within our facilities there. I think they even have extra chairs to set up, yes they bought those. I'll get into that in talking about the Friends.

One thing that has stimulated interest in our Library, and I think this must have been going on for at least twenty years, possibly twenty-five, is our Memorial Book program. The Library has sort of, in its public relations, encouraged people to give money to the Library in memory of deceased persons. Quite often they would prefer doing that to possibly other things for the family at the time of a person's death, and it has proven to be a very nice thing for our Library. Not only have we acquired a great number of books which we would ~~not~~ ^{never} have otherwise, but the person in whose memory the book is placed, that person's name has been kept before the public. There are other ways in which money donated to the Library has been used. We received a beautiful wall display case for the Irelands, and I believe that was memorial money. We had money given at the time of the death of Kareen Vrable, who was a Trustee of the Library for many years. We have a floor display case which was purchased with that money. We have a paperback book rack, which was purchased with memorial money from Clarence Schafer, so there are other ways in which we use it. At one time, at the death of one of our very interested Trustees, Mrs. Maureen Cheney, we received a legacy from her estate and part of that money was used for building the desk we now use in the Library.

Who built the desk?

Howard Whaley built the desk.

Ruth, on the other tape about the Library, I don't think we ever mentioned its address. Would you have the address of the Library?

Yes, I do. You know in a small town like this, many of us know where things are without knowing the street number, but this address happens to be 227 East Broad Street.

Right across from the Post Office.

That's right, very easy to find and I think it's visible from most all points down town. It's right across the bridge on the east side. I think too, that where we left off we mentioned that the desk which we are now using in the Library was made by Howard Whaley. Howard was a true friend of the Library, possibly our first one in the true sense of the word. To start with, he made the entire furniture, that is book stacks and things that we needed to operate with, for the move to the new Library. To begin

with, we did buy one book cart when we were in the Peet Community Center. After we got the pattern and decided that that was something that was very useful for us, we had a couple made at school. We furnished the material and the Industrial Arts class at school made a couple for us, but after we got into the new Library and needed more, then Howard made those for us. I think he made a step stool, maybe two, I'm not sure how many we have down there. The desk he made in 1964, and he made it up from a picture and according to specifications of what the librarians at that time thought they needed. Another interesting thing is that he made a frame for the picture of the old tree in front of the old Township Hall, which was removed a number of years ago and we thought, how sad to have it gone and not have something to remind future generations of that beautiful old tree. I think it was an elm. Howard took some of the wood from it, and someone had taken a picture. I'm not sure whether it was my mother, Mrs. Babion, or whether it was Irma Ireland, but someone took some very good pictures of it and we have one of the pictures of that tree framed in the wood of the tree. Howard made that and we have it hanging in the Library at this time. Now at the time of Howard's death last year, in 1976, no 1977 that would be, the Library did receive memorial money for books which were purchased and put in the Library in memory of him. I think really the greatest memorial we have of Howard is to look around in the Library and see all of the furniture which he made just as we wanted. It matches beautifully, and it was refinished by someone else, but Howard put it all together. We've been very grateful for that. Also, due to the generosity of his family after his death, we received all of his volumes of the National Geographic which his family had collected from the very beginning of its publication. At first when the gift was given to us, we were really quite excited, but we didn't know where we might store the books. It's a very large library of magazines, but they also offered the bookcases in which the National Geographics were stored. The first bookcase was made by Howard's father, who was also a very fine carpenter. Then the succeeding two were made by Howard himself, and except for the color of the wood, which probably wasn't possible to match exactly, they are identical. They have the shelves for the magazines, and then below are drawers for I believe storing the indexes for the National Geographics.

These National Geographics are bound, aren't they? *(just in binders)*

I believe they are,

By years, or half-years.

By years, or six months, I'm not just sure. Yes, they're in beautiful condition and certainly a wonderful addition to our Library.

I haven't examined them carefully, but if they aren't bound they have a special cover to hold a certain number of issues.

It could be. I don't remember, I was so stupified to see that huge library of magazines I just don't know, but we've been very grateful for it. Howard also did many repair jobs around the Library. When something went wrong and they didn't know whom to call, Howard would always come down and look at whatever the problem was. If he couldn't fix it he'd find out who could. So he was truly our first real friend of the Library.

Now that brings us maybe to where we should talk about our Chesaning Area Friends of the Library organization. This was really a culmination of a dream of mine, I might say. I urged Ward Anderson in about 1965 - I had resigned as a Board member of the Board of Trustees - and I was really interested in forming an organization which would not have the responsibilities of operating the Library, but which could go about in their own way to raise money or help in some other way, some physical way, the

Library itself. Well, Ward was very active during that year. We did form a sort of a big loose committee of people in the community who were interested in the Library, and it took in all the Townships which we serve. So we started out calling it Chesaning Area Friends of the Library which name it has today. By 1966 the organization was complete and we had our first meeting. I think one of the first things they took over maybe was Story Hour. Helen, you weren't working on Story Hour at that time, were you, I think you were on the Board of Trustees, but they did take over the Story Hour.

No, I started the Story Hour many, many years ago when the original Library was down in the Community Center, but I never worked on it after we came back to Chesaning in 1960.

Well, you were on the Board of Trustees at that time, I remember.

Yes, I was on the Board of Trustees.

We had many young women with small children and families, who were interested in maintaining the Story Hour, so they were a great help to the librarians, because it was difficult to find people who would give their time and effort to keeping this up. I think it did start then in the summertime, but I think it has since expanded to a year-around series of Story Hours, and the Friends still maintain that.

Shortly after we organized, we tried a couple of what we called Book for Lunch programs. In fact, it was in the spring of 1967. We had a couple months to go before summer came along, and we thought we'd try them. Richard Clifford, who was a Trustee at that time, our attorney, did the first one and Mrs. Bernadette McCrumb, who taught at Chesaning High School did the second one. Well these ^{were} so successful that in the fall we picked that up in September, and to this year we are ending up the spring of 1978, this has ^{been} continued, which makes a ten-year term of this. The lunches are packed by different organizations who furnish the food and the Friends of the Library themselves take care of the program and arrange everything else. The Book for Lunches take place at twelve o'clock noon. They last an hour. We meet at the Library, in the small room ordinarily, and people eat their lunches while the book review is going on and they're free to come and go as they need to. We attract business men as well as teachers and interested people in the community, and we have had some very, very fine programs. You yourself have done some, haven't you Helen.

Yes, I've done two, but Ruth, I think we should mention that these are packed lunches. You don't bring your own lunch.

Oh, yes I think I said they were packed by various organizations.

Oh did you, I'm so sorry, I must have been dreaming.

That's all right. We started out that way. I remember the Friends packed the first one as an experiment and I didn't sleep a wink the night before. I was afraid that we wouldn't get the lunch on time, or we would run out of food or something like that. We pack the lunches in boxes, small cartons, and furnish coffee and tea to go with them. I believe the charge was a dollar per lunch. Now at the present time it's gone up to a dollar and-a-half and the friends keep the money from that, which is in turn used for something for the Library. Another way they have of earning money is by used book sales. They have put on some quite successful ones. I couldn't give you any figures at all, but I'm sure they're down in the minutes of the Friends of the Library Board meetings.

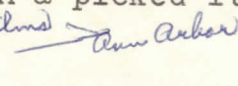
Now in 1976 practically every organization in town had a Bicentennial project, so the Friends of the Library thought that they should have one

too, and they finally settled on a good one, something that has been in demand in the community for some time. The library has several copies of a book published in 1903 by the firm of Ingalls & Ishe or Ishe & Ingalls, I don't know which it was called, two women who published the town paper. I don't know whether it was Chesaning Argus at that time, it might have been Chesaning Monitor. (I should have looked that up, but I didn't.) However, in this year of 1903 they published a very nice book, it had a paper cover, but it was on good paper and had lots of pictures of places and people in the community. It sold for 25¢ a copy - I hope I'm right on that - my mother told me the other day, and it was either 25 or 50¢, but I'm inclined to think it was 25. We had had great demands for the loan of that book. I think one had been lost, one was worn out. A few people in the community who had some of the originals had had hard covers put on them to keep them, but people were very interested in it, so the Friends of the Library decided to have this book republished, recopied, I should say. They have a method now of copying material in a book. We had it printed at a cost of \$3.00 per copy, and that year we sold it for \$3.00 a copy, and at the present time - it was a complete sellout - we do not have any more, but I think ^{that} they are considering having another printing of that, but we ~~felt~~ ^{felt} that was a real valuable service to this community. (Correction: cost should be \$6.00)

Now the following year, which was 1977, we realized that, through our librarian, there was really a need in the Library for preserving our very old copies of the Chesaning papers. They were in constant use by people who wanted to look up things in the 1860's, seventies, eighties, nineties and maybe the early part of 1900, and they were wearing. The paper was so yellow^{ed} and crumpled and we really don't have proper place for storage of them, to handle them. So we decided that, or the Friends of the Library decided to have them put on microfilm. Well, they're no good on microfilm unless you have a reader, so along with that it meant that we must buy a reader. We had Jim House, who was on the Friends of the Library Board at that time, was able to make the purchase possible for us of a reader-printer, which would not only read the microfilm, but would print out any part of the paper, or any paper that was put into it. So the decision was made to provide the money to purchase the reader-printer and then start a few of the older Arguses, or papers, on microfilm and then each year gradually add to it. So that's what they did last year, and they have had more put on microfilm this year and each succeeding year they will -- I think they're into the early 1900's now. They have made good progress on that.

Who does this, Ruth?

It's taken to Ann Arbor. I can't tell you the name of the company, but they pick up the book or else we take it down there. They're too valuable and too hard to send through, or get to them in any other way, and then I believe they deliver the microfilm back to us. (We have taken & picked it up ourselves).

/NOTE: ~~the~~ microfilm  Ann Arbor University

And the book, I hope.

Oh yes, and the book, yes. The book (the papers) have to be taken apart, but they put them back together. Now I think that just about covers that, Helen, as far as the Friends. I'm sure there are other detailed things that we could talk about but.....

Didn't the Friends start the Art Show?

Yes, you are right. Now what year did they start that Art Show? Well, I think maybe it was the second or third year that they were in existence, that is the Friends were operating. It was very successful, and they've had it each succeeding year. It comes in May after the Book for Lunches

1969

are over, and it's grown larger each year. Oh, here's the date right here. I have it on my notes, it was 1969 when they started it. This is 1978, so it's almost ten years old too. They must have started it shortly after they got the Book for Lunch operating.

We have quite a varied membership you might say ^{for us} in the community in the Friends of the Library, and it makes it possible to do a great many things because we have a lot of talent and a lot of interest in varied things, but all pertaining to the Library or Cultural things in the community.

I think it's important that we include in these activities of the Library the book that has been published about Chesaning, because it's been kept at the Library, it's been available there, and it's a very important thing in the history of our community.

← Well the Library helped pay for some of the publishing, didn't they?

← No, no the money for that was furnished by the Chamber of Commerce. They had a fund from the year that Chesaning celebrated their centennial. Was that 1946 or 1947?

← I don't know, Ruth.

← It should have been '47, but I think it was '46. At any rate, the Chamber of Commerce sponsored a big pageant and they earned, through putting on that pageant and charging for it, at the park - it was an outdoor thing - they earned a sum of money ~~over~~ and above what their expenses were for that year, and they decided after they had \$2500. left, or possibly a little bit more, I don't know, but that is what they gave to the Library, or to whoever wrote the check. Now I don't know what the workings were for that, that is, just how it was handled. I do know that the Chesaning Chamber of Commerce had \$2500. which was the cost of publishing the Place of the Big Rock. (500 copies were published)

Well, it may be that they furnished the money, but the Library Board furnished a lot of blood, sweat and tears.

Yes, it took the coordination of the Library Board, the Librarians and Irma Ireland to get that book published. It did take a lot of blood, sweat and tears, many hours of anguish, and I have to admire Irma Ireland for her perseverance in seeing that this book was published before her death. She worked awfully hard on it. Her husband, Colonel Mark Ireland, was a native of Chesaning, ~~He was born here~~ and went on to serve in the Armed Forces. After he retired as a Colonel he made his home in Washington, D.C., and came back each summer, he and Irma Ireland, his wife, to work on the material for this book. The articles in the book, many of them, were written up by people in the community who maybe knew some specific thing about it, but it did take years and years. In fact, we despaired of its ever being published, but Mrs. Ireland was positive that she was going to have that book published, and it was published in memory of her husband Colonel Mark Ireland. It got to the point where we were able to advertise in 1962 that this book was coming out, and I believe for quite a long while the Chamber of Commerce ran ads in the paper asking for orders for the book so that we would know about how many we would dare have printed. Now Mrs. Ireland had this printed in Maryland. She made all of the arrangements from her home in Washington, D.C. so we didn't really have to go through that hassle, but I'm sure that she spent many hard hours making the arrangements for that. Well it ended up, we had good coverage of it, of advertising that it was to be published, and it ended up that we had 500 copies printed, which took the \$2500. I'm sure that was a very modest price to have 500 copies made, because it's quite a large book. It has 420 pages, many, many pictures of early Chesaning as it used to be and people as they used to look. It has a hard binding,

green, with the name and a sketch of the Big Rock done in gold, and the book itself includes some other sketches. I should tell right here that those sketches were all done by Cadet Glen F. Rogers, Jr. He was then a cadet at West Point Military Accademy, and he was a grandson of Irma and Mark.

What are these sketches of?

They are sketches of the Big Rock mostly, or early, something about Chesaning of which they had no pictures, or maybe they had the picture and couldn't get it in print. He made these sketches, and they are very good. Now, I said, let's see, we first advertised this in 1962. Well several years went by and we had different things come up to delay the printing, and finally in the spring of 1966 the Library Board of Trustees decided that if they could get it into print by Showboat time, which is in July, of that year, that it would be an appropriate time because many, many people are in town, in the community, at Showboat time, and those who had ordered them could pick up their copies and they'd possibly sell to other interested people as well. Well I guess they put the pressure on the printers, and we did get the book. Now it was minus its end papers. The end papers were to have been a map, an early village map, a platt map I guess they call it, of Chesaning in green and white. Now those end papers were later sent and given out to people who had purchased the book so that they could put them in themselves, but the book did arrive and we were very happy with it. It was terribly exciting, but where to put the book? Well naturally, we had to store it at the Library, and do you remember, Helen, it was all over the place wasn't it?

No, because you see, I'm not here in the summer time.

Oh yes, well we had those books stored, 500 large books is a lot of books to take care of, and the Library really put up with an awful lot that summer. We looked at them and thought, will we ever sell 500 of those? Well needless to say, at the present time, I don't think there's a book available to be sold.

Oh, isn't there?

I don't believe so. We sold them, I think, for \$5.00 a copy.

I know you did.

Is that what it was? If they are reprinted it's hard to tell what the cost would be, probably fifteen, or twenty dollars. It's hard to tell.

There was really no money made on that five dollars.

No, no this was not to make money, because they had the money for the printing. How they ever came out with that I don't know, because I was no longer on the Board of Trustees, but it was considered a big accomplishment for the Library Board to take charge of.

I don't remember exactly, but I think the Library was to have the money. You see, the money was paid out for the printing and I think what came back from the sale was to go to the Library, but I probably shouldn't say for sure.

Well, we could perhaps get into that at a later date sometime and look it up.

But there's no point in it anyway now.

No. I should say too, that those books had a little place where each one is numbered and as they were sold, the person who got them has a certain number book, which means that it is the original printing on the book;

which may be valuable at some date, who knows?

Well Helen, I think, unless you can think about something else to talk about, I believe that that brings us fairly up to date.

Well, Ruth, I must thank you, because this has certainly been a ^{very} comprehensive affair. It took us a long time to get going, but once you got ready for us you had a lot to offer, and I do thank you very much.