Elmhurst Library Has All The Answers

On July 8, 1912, the city council passed an ordinance establishing a public library and an annual tax levy for its support.

The first library board met, drew up a set of by-laws and appointed one of the patrons to find a place suitable for its needs and budget. The city granted the board $400, half of which was to be used for the purchase of books. H Amprey, who lived across the street from the library, offered to pay the rent.

Finally, after three and a half years and an accrual of tax money, a board committee procured a room in the rear of the old Glars building at the corner of York and Park. The board allotted $400 for books, $15 per month for rent, $5 per month for junior services and $15 per month for librarian’s salary. The Elmhurst Woman’s club, interested in the establishment of the library, contributed $75 toward the purchase of children’s books.

On March 22, 1916, despite a heavy snow storm, the doors opened for the first time. 96 people crowded into the room. The Elmhurst Public library was born. Starting with 330 volumes, part of them a gift from a discontinued boys club, the library attracted 106 people per day.

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On Sunday, Jan. 31, 1917, the Elmhurst Public library held an open house to show off the extensive changes made in the building since the last presentation of short reviews of books and library information. A summer reading program for children was introduced. During the summer, the library closed during the morning hours.

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As new owners look over the original Washam house, it gradually changed from Wilder's Lancaster Lodge (above) into the library building as it appears today.

Remodeling also extended to the exterior. A hard paint was held back, and the north and south entrances, the enclosing of the book drop, the erection of a partition closing off the circulation desk and the construction of a new stairway and main book collection for the Children's department was started and a cabinet was constructed to house these prizes.

The automated circulation system was installed and coding all library materials was started. The new system also required the reorganization of all the computer of all library patrons.

In 1986 the library board requested permission to hold a library referendum to raise the library levy. The referendum passed on March 19.

**Park District Helps Keep Elmhurst A Colorful City**

The Elmhurst Park district will observe its 60th year of serving residents' leisure and recreational needs during the city's sesquicentennial. Over the years park district facilities have grown from the first land acquisition — 12-acre Wilder Park — to the current 28 leisure and recreational facilities on 428 acres of land. In addition to park land and facilities, the district provides year-round recreation programs for all age groups.

On June 5, 1930, an election established a separate governing body with its own ordinances and tax levying powers.

Shortly after organization, the board began negotiations for acquisition of the Thomas Bryan estate, located at York street and St. Charles road. Before negotiations were completed, the city of Elmhurst was bequeathed the north half of the Wilder estate in the heart of Elmhurst, with the proviso that the city would erect a library within five years.

The city council found this an impossibility and asked the park board to secure the south half of the twelve acre tract which included the Wilder home.

The park board started negotiations on the Bryan property and purchased the south part of the Wilder estate for $45,000. The board then sold the Wilder estate house and one acre of land surrounding it back to the city, part of the as the library site. Upon completion of these transactions, the city ceded the southern six acres to the park district and the Wilder estate became Wilder park.

Butterfield park was purchased for $16,500 in April 1930.

Other land acquisitions followed: Salt Creek was purchased for $20,000 in 1927; East End park was purchased for $30,000 in 1929; and Elmhurst's first swimming pool was opened in East End park in 1937. The first organized recreation program — a children's playground program — was offered for the first time in 1942.

Added impetus to the local recreation movement was provided in 1958 when the voters of the district approved an increase in the tax rate which made additional funds available for maintenance and development and increasing the recreational program.

Eldridge park was added to the system in 1954, purchased for $37,000. It was named after Edward Eldridge, one of the pioneer settlers, who staked his claim to land in Elmhurst in 1834.

York Commons park was acquired in 1965 and Elmhurst's second swimming pool was opened in the park in 1967.

In 1971, voters approved a $13.9 million bond referendum for land acquisition, park development and special facility development. The majority of the district's open space acreage was purchased within the following 10-year period and much of the facility development was conducted in the same time span.

Four special facilities that resulted were: • The Courts — an indoor tennis and racquetball center; • two outdoor swimming pools; • a multi-purpose gymnasium; • a golf course; • an indoor tennis and racquetball center; • two outdoor swimming pools; • an indoor tennis and racquetball facility; • Sugar Creek Golf course — a nine-hole executive course; • The Abbey Senior center — on St. Charles road which provides seniors with recreational and leisure activities, as well as social services and a weekday lunch program; • The Elmhurst Communi- city Center, formerly at Eldridge and Wilder Park; • The Madison park, an unused school leased from the school district. The community center also houses the Elmhurst Art museum maintained by the Fine Arts and Civic Center Foundation.

In addition, the park district acquired the Depot property from Chicago and North Western Railroad on York road in 1971. It was renovated by the park district as a Bicentennial project in 1975 along with the construction of the Bicentennial Fountain on the same site at Wild Meadow Trace. The Depot and the fountain were dedicated on July 4, 1975.

In 1985 and 1986, Pioneer park was developed to include a picnic area, children's play area, a baseball diamond and walkways.

**Something For Everybody**

Current park facilities include: a community center; a senior center; seven recreation buildings; a conservatory greenhouse; a golf course; an indoor tennis and racquetball center; two outdoor swimming pools; a multi-purpose gymnasium; 18 group picnic areas; 26 individual picnic areas; 20 play areas; eight passive recreation areas; a fitness trail; 10 outdoor basketball courts; children's play areas; a baseball diamond and walkways.

**Special Events**

Elmhurst Park district's special events have been popular with...
ELMHURST!

COLORFUL YEARS