

1621

Poplar Bluff Public Library

Poplar Bluff Public Library

**Poplar Bluff
Public Library**
Poplar Bluff, Mo.

The reader must bring this card when borrowing or returning a book.
Every reader may take two books, only one being fiction. Additional books may be taken for study.
A book may be kept two weeks with privilege of renewal.
A fine of two cents a day will be charged for each book kept over time.
Fines will be charged for damage to books.



Date Due

Jun 12 '39			
Dec 24 '40			
Aug 15 '46			
Oct 12 '51			
Oct 24 '51			
May 5 '52			
Jul 6 '53			
Nov 28 '53			
Nov 17 '54			
Apr 2 '55			
May 19 '55			
Feb 13 '57			
Apr 18 '57			
Sep 21 '61			
Oct 30 '61			
Aug 13 '62			
Oct 15 '62			
Nov 28 '63			
Mar 30 '64			
Apr 16 '64			
Apr 22 '64			
Apr 2 '66			
Apr 16 '69			

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The
Poplar Bluff Public Library

1915—1937

By Mrs. M. C. HORTON

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Poplar Bluff Public Library

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Printed and Dedicated to

Mrs. M. C. HORTON

By the

BOARD of DIRECTORS, September 1937



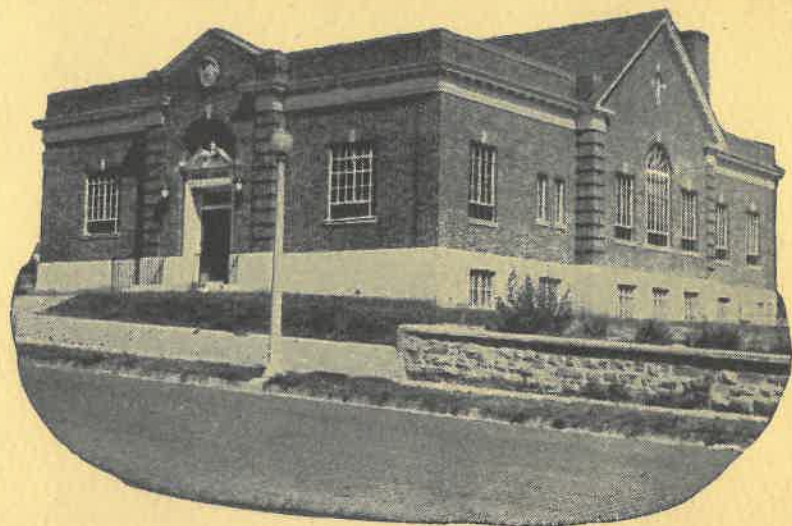
THE information included in the pages of this little brochure was gathered together and published by the Board of Directors of the Poplar Bluff Library as a tribute to Mrs. M. C. Horton who was the first and for twenty-two years the only President of the Board. It was through her tireless efforts and unwavering loyalty to the development of this public institution that the Library was moved into its own beautiful home in 1936; a fitting climax to a long and faithful devotion to a public trust.

Directors:

Mrs. John Berryman
Mrs. A. D. Reeder
Mrs. J. L. Lindsay
Mrs. Fay D. Bacon
Mrs. Sam Phillips
W. W. Maze
Albert Boeving
E. L. Abington
Dr. Lester Harwell

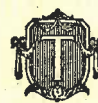


The above is a reproduction of an oil portrait of Mrs. M. C. Horton presented to the Library by the Bay View Club of Poplar Bluff of which she is a member. The painting hangs in the Board of Directors' Room.



Poplar Bluff Public Library

History



THE idea of a public library for Poplar Bluff originated in the Bay View Reading Club in 1915. Mrs. M. C. Horton, then president of the club, had served on a library board in Oregon, and her experience, together with a wish to foster a project of lasting good to the community, led the club to propose the organization of a library. A Library Committee of five members was appointed to devise ways and means.

A mass meeting at some public place was suggested but the idea was abandoned, since it was feared that people would not come. It was then decided to hold the meeting in a private home, and issue invitations.

On the night of March 29, 1915, this meeting was held at Mrs. Horton's home. Two hundred and fifty invitations were issued, stating the purpose of the meeting and asking each guest to bring a book. The guests included the Mayor, the members of the City Council, all the lawyers, the Superintendent of Schools, the principal of the High School, the ministers of all the churches; the wives and sweethearts of all these men; and as many other influential people as the house would accommodate. Representatives of the

four women's clubs were in attendance, the clubs at that time being the Monday Literary Club, the Stoddard Club (now the Travel Study Club), the Women's Community Improvement Club, and the Bay View Reading Club (now the Bay View Literary Club).

Mrs. Horton stated the purpose of the meeting—the starting of a library movement in Poplar Bluff. The women were not asking for money, just co-operation, feeling that much preliminary work could be done until better times. The plan at that time was to secure a Carnegie Library building.

Mrs. W. A. Paul spoke on Carnegie libraries and the requirements necessary to secure one.

Mrs. L. W. Chapman of the Stoddard Club and Mrs. Nelle Smith of the Community Club spoke in behalf of their organizations, and assured the Bay View Club of their support.

A number of the men present were then called upon. Those responding were L. W. Hanna, Principal of the High School; Representative Almon Ing; Rev. R. L. Russell of the Methodist Church; Rev. E. W. Behner of the Presbyterian Church; George Begley, Jr., of the City Council; J. O. Willett, secretary of the Y. M. C. A.; Judge Byrd Duncan; N. C.

Whaley, City Counsellor. These all approved the library movement, and promised their co-operation. Mr. Begley, hoping to start something, pledged the proceeds from the first 100 bushels of rice grown on his big rice farm at Dudley. This promise was kept, and when the first rice crop was harvested Mr. Begley sent Mrs. Horton a check for \$100.00 for the library work.

One hundred and fifty good books were collected at this meeting. These were stored in Mrs. Horton's attic, and insured, Morrison Clevlen donating the insurance.

Each of the other clubs were asked to appoint a Library Committee, which they did. These committees met at Mrs. Horton's home on December 15, 1915, and formed a Library Association.

A board of nine trustees was elected to handle all business of the Association, the board members being D. W. Hill, Joseph Ashcroft, W. H. Meredith, Mrs. W. N. Barron, Mrs. H. I. Ruth, Sr., Mrs. J. L. Lindsay, Mrs. W. A. Paul, Mrs. M. C. Horton and Mrs. F. E. Obermiller. At the first meeting of the Board Mrs. Horton was elected president; Mr. Joseph Ashcroft vice president; Mrs. Obermiller secretary, and Mrs. Barron treasurer, which office she held until shortly before her death in 1935.

The Library Association decided to canvass the women of the town for memberships of one dollar

Poplar Bluff Public Library

each. The town was divided into five districts and assigned to the clubs. The business district was not included, and the men were not solicited, since they had been told at the initial meeting that they would not be asked for funds until the women had shown what they could do.

Several silver teas were also given for the benefit of the library by the different clubs, and when the committees reported, it was found that they had secured three hundred memberships; and with what had been raised from other sources the Association had about \$350.00 on hand. In the meantime donations of good books had been coming in, and the Association felt it was now in position to open the library.

The men and women of Poplar Bluff co-operated in splendid fashion. Mr. W. N. Barron gave the use of a room in his building on Pine Street for some months, the Association later paying a small rent. He also gave an office desk and chair; Mrs. W. W. Turner gave three tables; local lumbermen lumber, and carpenters donated their labor in making shelves; the Kilgore Mfg. Co. gave a beautiful big table, which is still in use at the library; the Travelers' Protective Association gave \$25.00 for chairs. Mrs. L. W. Hanna, wife of the High School principal, had had library experience, and directed the cataloging of the books by the Dewey system. The Association tried to start right, purchasing the proper supplies as economically as possible. Mrs. F. E. Obermiller secured a splendid gift

of twelve hundred used books from the St. Louis Public Library; the Library Association bought \$150.00 worth of new books; everyone helped, and in a few weeks the library was open for the loaning of books.

The hours at first were from two to five P. M., on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, different club women acting as librarians.

When the borrowers' list had reached 400, it seemed necessary to have the services of a regular librarian. The men on the Library Board felt the women had made a success of the library, and were entitled to support from the business men; so they went before the Commercial Club, explained the situation, and asked the Club to raise \$400.00 to support the library. A committee from the Commercial Club was appointed to solicit funds, and more than \$400.00 was collected.

Miss Lucy Horton was employed as librarian, at a salary of \$10.00 a month.

The library soon became so popular, and such an asset to the community, that in 1917 the Library Board decided the time was ripe to ask the city for a mill tax to support the library. The election was successful, and the resulting tax support assured the future of the library from a financial standpoint. The Library Association was automatically dissolved, and the library became a city institution, appointments to the

Library Board being made by the mayor and city council.

Shortly after the election, Miss Horton resigned to take a position with the Missouri State Library Commission, and Mrs. J. L. Lindsay was made librarian. Under her leadership the library was more of a success than ever, and soon outgrew its quarters. In the summer of 1919 the Public Library was moved volume by volume across the street to the old Perkin's home on the corner of Pine and Broadway owned by Mrs. W. P. Barnett. Boy Scouts helped carry the books and move furniture. Thus it was possible in this new home to seat twenty-three readers as the library at this time boasted three big tables, a small one for children and twenty chairs. During this time, a campaign was made to secure a bond issue for a library building. In the ensuing election, the proposition carried, but lacked the necessary two-thirds majority, and the election failed.

For the third time it became necessary to find more housing space and in the summer of 1930, about thirteen thousand books were moved to the former Elk's Home on the corner of Poplar and Second Streets, where Mrs. Lindsay's splendid work made it one of the outstanding libraries of the State. It came to be known throughout Missouri, and beyond, as a modern small-town library, and in 1930 won a prize offered by the Missouri Library Association for the best advertised small-town library. Mrs. Lindsay's leadership, her knowledge of library possibilities, her

love of books, and her interest in people, both old and young, resulted in library facilities being made available to an enormous list of borrowers, not only in Poplar Bluff, but in all of Butler County.

The outcome of this awakened interest in libraries and their work has resulted in small libraries springing up all over Southern Missouri, and Mrs. Lindsay is in constant demand to help and advise with library projects.

Another outstanding feature of Mrs. Lindsay's administration was her work with children, arousing an interest in books and the forming of reading habits.

In 1935 Mrs. Lindsay resigned, and Mrs. Agnes Maske was made librarian. She and her staff carried on the traditions of the library, and the work grew constantly in scope and effectiveness. Associated with Mrs. Maske were Mrs. Helen Cain, assistant librarian, Miss Virginia Williams, children's librarian, and Miss Helen Dalton, assistant.

In this same year the Elk's Home was sold, and the library was moved to temporary quarters in a store room at Poplar and Broadway.

A permanent home for the Library was now an absolute necessity, so Mrs. Sam Phillips, a member of the Library Board, called together a Citizen's Committee to discuss the project. This Committee included representatives from every women's organiza-

tion in Poplar Bluff—more than thirty of them. It was decided to circulate a petition to the City Council calling for an election to provide a bond issue for a new library building. Through the efforts of Mrs. Phillips and the Citizen's Committee, over 750 signatures to the petition were obtained, the majority being tax payers. When this petition was presented to the Council, a bond issue election was authorized, calling for the construction of a new \$30,000.00 library building.

In July, 1935, the bond issue election was held. Mrs. Phillips and her committee of women worked untiringly to get out the vote, and the bond issue carried by a vote of 716 to 57.

The present Library Board is: Mrs. M. C. Horton, president; Mrs. Sam Phillips, secretary; W. W. Maze, treasurer; Dr. C. B. Coleman, vice president; Mrs. Fay Bacon, Mrs. A. D. Reeder, Joseph Ashcroft, Mrs. J. W. Berryman, and E. L. Abington. Mrs. Horton and Mr. Ashcroft were members of the first Library Board, Mrs. Horton having served continuously as president of the Board for twenty-two years.

As this article is being written, workmen are busy with the construction of a beautiful brick and stone building for the Poplar Bluff Public Library; a source of entertainment, instruction and benefit to thousands, a splendid asset to the community, and a monument to the altruism, the perseverance, and the vision of the women of Poplar Bluff.

The formal opening of the new Poplar Bluff Public Library was held Friday night, September 11, 1936. The members of the Library Board and the Library Staff were present to receive and conduct the visitors throughout the building. Nearly 1000 persons visited the Library during the evening. Library services were resumed September 12th.

The formal dedication of the new building was postponed until October 12, 1936, as the Missouri Library Association accepted an invitation to hold their annual State convention in Poplar Bluff October 12-14. The convention was the occasion for the dedication of Poplar Bluff's new \$50,000 public library and elaborate ceremonies were arranged for this occasion. Mayor Allen, Mrs. M. C. Horton, President of the Library Board; Mrs. J. L. Lindsay, former Librarian, and Mrs. J. D. Maske, Librarian, took part in the dedication services. Mrs. Gertrude Drury, president of the Missouri Library Association presided over the meeting as a whole. The principal speaker of the evening was Mr. Forrest Spaulding, Librarian of the Des Moines Public Library.

About seventy-five Librarians attended the convention and many pronounced it one of the most enjoyable State Conventions ever held, and commented favorably upon the hospitality of the Library friends of Poplar Bluff. Charles Finger, winner of the New-

berry Award for Childrens' books was guest speaker at the banquet held at the Dunn Hotel.

Some of the most outstanding authors of the United States sent congratulations to the members of the Poplar Bluff Public Library Board and greetings to the members of the Missouri Library Association in session in Poplar Bluff. This exhibit was displayed in the Library during the convention.

In December, 1936, Mrs. Agnes Maske after eleven years in Library service in Poplar Bluff offered her resignation to the Board and Mrs. Helen Cain, her assistant, was made Librarian. A month later Mrs. Horton, after continuous service as President of the Board, sent in her resignation, and Mrs. J. L. Lindsay was appointed to fill this vacancy. Mrs. J. W. Berryman became the President with Mrs. Fay Bacon the new Vice President.

ADDENDA

DESCRIPTION OF LIBRARY

The new library building was designed and erected under the supervision of Pleitsch and Price, Architects, St. Louis. The Rinehart Construction Company, also of St. Louis, were the general contractors.

The building is of Georgian design, and is beautiful because of its simplicity. In the basement is a large lecture room, seating 300, which is intended for educational purposes, childrens' story hours and other like needs. A mending room, newspaper room and storage room and furnace are provided on this floor.

The first floor of the building houses the library proper. On either side of the entrance are offices for the use of the Librarian and Trustees. As one enters the reading room from the foyer, one is impressed by the size of the room, 28 feet wide by 57 feet long, with a high arched ceiling 18 feet at the center. Fixtures for illumination are concealed in the built-in book cases around the room. This room is attractively furnished, with one side given over to children and the other side to adults.

Immediately in back of the reading room is the main stack room, 23 feet deep by 54 feet wide. All

BIOGRAPHY OF MRS. HORTON

By Lucy Horton Fitz

Anna M. Mehaffey Horton was born at McKeesport, Pa., the daughter of Ruth Sill and William Mehaffey.

She graduated from Teachers' College, California, Pa., and the Shoemaker School of Oratory in Philadelphia, and afterwards taught English and Oratory in the State Colleges of California and Lockhaven, Pa.

In 1886 she came to Missouri with her parents who decided to make their home in Poplar Bluff. For the next two years she taught in the State Normal School at the neighboring town of Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

She was married to Milton Clark Horton in 1889, and has made her home in Poplar Bluff ever since, with the exception of six years spent in Oregon from 1907 to 1913. To them were born four children: Lucy, Will, Ruth and Dorothy, who are still living.

Mrs. Horton was reared a Presbyterian, and joined the Poplar Bluff church in 1886, shortly after its organization. Not only has she devoted much time to her religious activities, but she has also been

public spaces throughout the first floor are covered with a cork tile flooring. The reading room has an acoustical ceiling designed to deaden noise.

Throughout the building, in the manner of finish, the architects and the Library Board have striven to keep a simple and unassuming appearance, relying on the use of good materials, properly finished, to furnish the decorative scheme. All woods are of quarter-sawed white oak stained and varnished, door trim is of metal and the doors are the solid slab type with no panels. Plastering is tinted a warm brown, with cream ceilings.

The heating equipment is of the blast air type so designed to recirculate the air and automatically maintain an even temperature with controlled humidity.

affiliated with most of the worthwhile organizations of Poplar Bluff. She was the first President of the Woman's Missionary Society, and the first President of the Bay View Literary Club which was organized in 1914. Twice she served as President of the Ninth District of Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, and became a member of the State Board by virtue of that office.

During the World War, Mrs. Horton served as District Chairman of the Women's Council of Defense, Ninth District, and also served as Vice Chairman of the Butler County Chapter of the Red Cross.

In 1915, Mrs. Horton was one of the principal promoters of a Public Library for Poplar Bluff, and was its first President. Through her efforts the Library became one of the outstanding institutions of its kind in the State of Missouri, growing until a beautiful new building to house the Library was erected during the last year of her Presidency.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY BOARD

The Poplar Bluff Library Board passed the following resolutions of respect to Mrs. M. C. Horton, our retiring President.

Whereas: Mrs. M. C. Horton has tendered her resignation as a member of the Library Board, which resignation has been received and accepted with genuine sorrow by her fellow members on the Board,

And Whereas, together with the other interested citizens of the city, we realize and appreciate that Mrs. Horton more than any other person, is responsible for our present magnificent library and beautiful building in which it is located,

And Whereas, we feel and believe that her absence from the Board will be profoundly felt,

Now Therefore, be it resolved by the members of the Library Board of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, that we hereby express to Mrs. Horton our sincere and heartfelt regret that she will no longer serve with us as a faithful member of our Board, and that we hereby tender her our thanks for her services in the past, and wish her Godspeed on her journey through life in the future, and that these resolutions be spread upon the record and a copy thereof be sent to Mrs. Horton and published in the Poplar Bluff American Republic.
February 25, 1937.

Mrs. J. W. Berryman, President,
Mrs. Sam M. Phillips, Secretary.