

# CHATSWORTH TOWNSHIP LIBRARY HISTORY

After reading "Sands of Time" by Louise Stoutemeyer we learn that Chatsworth had a library as early as 1878. This is the first record of a library in town and it was referred to as the Chatsworth Reading Rooms. The librarian at that time was Mary Linton. Apparently the library continued to serve the community as the [next](#) mention of the library was in 1881.

February 1881 a bad fire destroyed five businesses and the library was among them. The library was restored and in August of 1884 the Chatsworth Library Association set the annual dues as \$2 and operated under the leadership of librarian, Ida Shroyer. During this time period a committee of three men and three women served as censors to guarantee that there were no "naughty" books placed on the shelves of the library.

In 1908 the library moved and opened in rooms in the Walter block in back of Kerrins-Fitzgerald real estate office. Mrs. Stella Haskell served as librarian. At this time in history, the library books were nearly 400 in number. The library was upstairs on the left of the hall. The library was open from 2 until 5:30 in the afternoons and was open Tuesday and Saturday evenings from 7-9:00. Everything in the library at that time was donated.

1909 brought a new librarian, Helena Aaron. She organized a box social with proceeds going to support the library. By 1910 there were 763 loaned during the first quarter of the year. Seventy-three new books were added, \$74.40 was received and \$86 was paid out during the first quarter. The librarian's salary was \$13 a month and rent for the building was \$25 per quarter. Tag days and book showers were other fund raisers used to raise funds for the library.

Because the library did not have a permanent home, it underwent two additional moves before landing in the present location. From the Walter building to the Herr building was the first of these moves. In 1923 the library moved above the Citizen's bank. From [the bank](#) the library moved to the Charles Shafer building. Originally, it only occupied a small room in the back. It was enlarged until it took up the entire west half of the building. In 1976 the library board voted to accept the assets of the old Chatsworth Public Library and announced a five day week. In 1978 after the citizens had voted for a township library, the board purchased the building and by 1980 occupied the entire building. It was redecorated, new shelves obtained and made into the library that now exists.