



Jennie Lines (in back center), the first paid librarian in Barrington, was born in 1887 in Tazewell County, Illinois (East Peoria). By the early 1890s, the Lines family was in Barrington. Her grandfather was the first-ever elected president of Barrington, Milius B. McIntosh, in 1866. This local country schoolhouse photo was taken during World War I.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

FIND A WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE AND REFUGE AT THE LIBRARY

"If you cannot read all of your books, fondle them—peer into them, let them fall open where they will, read from the first sentence that arrests the eye, set them back on the shelves with your own hands, arrange them on your own plan so that you at least know where they are. Let them be your friends; let them, at any rate, be your acquaintances." –Winston Churchill

These words are reproduced on a plaque in Sir Winston's library at his Chartwell home. They are from a man who had spent most of his life in great houses that often contained centuries-old private libraries.

But for most of us, we browse the shelves of our local public library, check out our choices, and return them within a proscribed time. Today a public library offers much more. Now they are multi-media destinations for research, meetings, community related special events, activities for all ages, and spaces to quietly turn the pages.

The first free, modern public library in America opened in Peterborough, New Hampshire, in 1833. Their Town Libraries were the first to be funded by a municipality for the sole purpose of establishing a free library open to all classes of the community. The Boston Public Library is credited with being the first free municipal library in a large city. Today in America there are 9,000 public library branches

in cities, suburbs, and rural areas—many which were established by Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish-American industrialist and philanthropist who granted his fortune in part to build 2,509 Carnegie Libraries in the United States.

Our Barrington Area Library had modest beginnings in 1915, with a few book shelves in the W. J. Cameron Drug Store on Park Avenue. The Womans' Club encouraged the donation of funds for the acquisition of books and donations from private libraries. Early librarians were volunteers. Barrington's first paid librarian was Jennie Lines, appointed in 1925 (age 38).

Barrington was a growing community where education and knowledge were highly valued, and by 1956, library collections and circulation overflowed the second floor of the Village Hall where they had been housed since 1924. In response, the Barrington Library District opened its doors to the public on July 8, 1957, at the corner of Hough Street and Monument Avenue—today, the Barrington Township offices.

The present Library opened in 1978 as the Barrington Area Library District serving all 72 square miles of the Barrington area, one of the largest library districts geographically in Illinois. It is a place of endless exploration, and when needed, refuge from the madding crowd to quietly turn the pages and be renewed in spirit. 